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THE GREAT MATCH,
AND
OTHER MATCHES.



NO NAME SERIES.

"IS THE GENTLEMAN ANONYMOUS? IS HE A GREAT UNKNOWN?"

DANIEL DERONDA.

◎

THE GREAT MATCH,
AND
OTHER MATCHES.

BOSTON:

ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1877.

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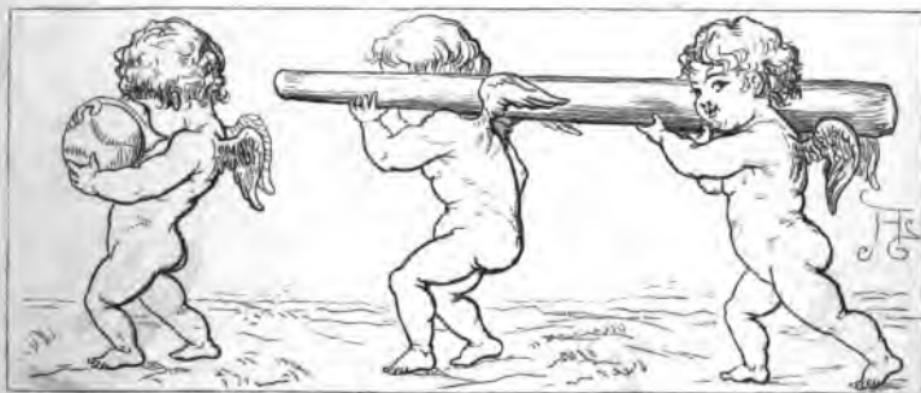
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THE GREAT MATCH.

CHAPTER I. MILLTOWN AND DORNFIELD.



THE villages of Milltown and Dornfield presented a great contrast. Milltown was situated upon a river, and was the seat of many manufactories; it was a bustling, money-making place: while Dornfield was five miles from Milltown, in the centre of a fine agricultural country. The railroad ran through Milltown;

but Dornfield had to be reached by stage. The Milltownites, as they were termed by their neighbors the Dornfieldites, had great contempt for the little agricultural town. The young country boys flocked to Milltown, leaving their fathers to plod on their old-fashioned way at Dornfield ; for, after a day's work in the mills and machine-shops, there were bright stores to lounge about in the evening, good livery-stables, and much excitement. Young country maidens also found much in Milltown to prefer to the quiet of Dornfield. There were many dry-goods stores ; there were balls, and sociables, photograph saloons, knick-knack shops ; and — there were young men in bright neckties and unexceptionable boots. The civil war had done much for Milltown. Great mills sprang up almost in a day, and lit up the dammed-up river at night with hundreds of golden spears. New stores, with the latest novelties from the metropolis, perched themselves upon sandy banks, or were to be seen in the midst of vacant lots, expecting to be built around speedily in the great land speculation which was rife. In approaching Milltown by the railroad, one saw nothing until the train, issuing from a bridge, stopped at the depot. At evening, the entire male population seemed to congregate on the platforms. The scraps of news from the neigh-

boring villages along the route of the railroad were exchanged ; the old men, before the arrival of the train, discussed their ailments, and, after the departure of the engine, hobbled homeward, as if the iron horse, with its rush and its energy, had stirred up the sluggishness of their much-talked about "systems." They went first to the post-office veranda, to talk over the arrival of the agent of the Duck Mills with the head of the house, and to wonder if he had come up to buy that "privilege of Bateman's." Every one at the Milltown depot seemed to be in a fever-heat of excitement. Packages of goods were trundled about almost too fast to allow the curious to read the addresses upon them. Mrs. Page's Saratoga trunks were deposited in a half-yawning state. Cases of cotton machinery were cleared out of the way, to make way for bundles of newspaper, champagne baskets, which were perhaps used to pack Mrs. Page's new set of china-ware in ; and crates of the latest delicacies. Standing in the door-way of the depot could be seen the small boy, who had evidently spent the afternoon in a huckleberry pasture ; the collarless young village Adonis, who had come to see if a lady friend was going up on the train ; and the transient, who was making up his mind whether to be hustled about on the platform, or to be shut into a room papered with railroad

announcements, none of which gave him the desired information. While all the bustle was found on the front platform, and belonged entirely to Milltown, the dingy old stage for Dornfield, with its streaks of yellow paint, its weather-beaten straps, and its ewe-necked horses, was always to be found behind the depot, half concealed, as if afraid to be contrasted with the shining new equipages which were drawn up ostentatiously at the front side of the platform, waiting for the manufacturing magnates of Milltown. Certainly, the stranger would never think of leaving the bustling main street, with its modern stores, its comfortable inn, its accessibility to the railroad for Dornfield. There were four churches in Milltown to one in Dornfield. There was a circulating library, six apothecary stores, and three newspaper offices, while Dornfield could only boast of one s. When one speaks of enterprise and energy, ltown should not be contrasted with Dornfield. But one speedily discovered a difference in the two towns. It seems that, in the early days, the Indians killed six of the inhabitants of Dornfield to one of those of Milltown. Why this difference? It certainly argued blood; and to this day the aristocracy is to be found at Dornfield, and shoddy at Milltown. In a strange way, it happened, notwithstanding the clemency of the Indians,

that no one seemed to have any superfluous ancestors in Milltown. There was a shelf in the town library devoted to genealogies of the rich manufacturers of Milltown ; but there were no time-honored names there, as there were in Dornfield. Milltown had the money, and Dornfield the aristocracy. This was universally acknowledged. The village papers of Milltown often amused themselves about what they termed the blue blood of Dornfield. Whenever a representative to the general court was to be elected, the two towns were brought into active rivalry ; for there was but one representative for the two, and each strove to elect one of their own townsmen. The cry of blue blood and kid-glove aristocracy, raised by the partisan papers of Milltown generally decided the day ; and the manufacturing population elected a Milltownite, although no one wore kid gloves in Dornfield. The ministers in Milltown preached for the Universal Church, and against the sin of exclusiveness. The minister at Dornfield held up the dangers incident to making money, and prayed that their neighbors at Milltown might remember that where there was the greater temptation to sin, there was also the greater reward.

The society in Milltown was very easy. The transition from poverty to wealth in many cases had been sudden. Every one was hospitable,

and claimed the right to ask as many personal questions as were necessary to form an accurate opinion of each other's business. When the agent of the Duck Mills had a party, there was no exclusiveness : every one was invited ; and, if the crowd was too great for comfort, and every one was squeezed, and the ice-cream gave out, people went home, on the whole pleased ; because the agent invited everybody, and shook every one by the hand. Wealth had not been long enough in its sudden possessors' hands to create fine distinctions. There were no sets in Milltown ; no cliques : everybody was as good as anybody. If anybody wanted to see how happy people could be without ancestors, one should have gone to Milltown. If one desired to escape the harassing knowledge that there was a set which he was not in,— Milltown. If any one desired to meet real American people, without a trace of the pronunciation of a Briton ; people who talked right *nosely*, — Milltown.

All that we have said in regard to Milltown argues that the reverse can be told of Dornfield. A lady has the art of describing two people in the description of one ; for the tone of her voice implies that she wishes the second party had the virtues of the first, which she so glowingly describes : but a writer has not this power, he must extenuate. Now Dornfield, in its turn, had its

virtues. It was peopled by many of those whose ancestors came over in the "Mayflower." There had never been any temptation to its inhabitants to invest their comparatively small properties in manufacturing, for the river had chosen to run to the east of the range of hills that separated the valley of Milltown from the sweet intervals of Dornfield. The population had early been engaged in agricultural pursuits. There were many large landed proprietors, who lived in the old substantial mansions built a hundred years ago, beneath elms which witnessed many Indian scrimmages. In these old mansions the owners preserved with jealous care the samplers worked by their female ancestors, the spinning-wheels, the antique clocks, and the straight-backed chairs, which were their proofs of old family. If a gatherer of old furniture could have entered the houses in Dornfield, he would have gone wild with delight. These old mansions were kept up with great care by their descendants, although in many cases the eldest sons had gone West to seek their fortunes. This preservation was due to some fortunate marriages which the handsome daughters of Dornfield farmers had made with aristocratic families in the metropolis. On the main street of the place there was, as we have said, but one store, and an old tavern, which was once renowned as the stopping-place of the stages

which ran from Albany to the metropolis. It was now strictly temperance, and very quiet. A few of the best people came there to board every summer. Some of the old stages were tumbling to pieces in a corner of the barn attached to the house. The unreclaimed in Milltown told very facetious stories in regard to the possibility of getting something to quench their thirst at this tavern. They once used to make the attempt very often ; but the stern respectability of the maiden lady summer-boarders, and the knowledge that a lineal descendant of the first minister killed by the Indians in Dornfield inhabited the house, made them extremely wary.

It is true that there were cliques and sets in Dornfield. Unfortunately the Indians could not foresee, that, in tomahawking some and sparing others, they were creating immense distinctions in society. When to the fact that one's ancestors had been scalped was joined the fact of an alliance with a family which had a judge in it, even the most bigoted leveler in Milltown felt an involuntary respect for such Dornfield families. Then, too, there was much culture in Dornfield. Several literary men and women had resided there from time to time, and had sown seed which had been religiously perpetuated by several families. Most of the ladies in town sketched, and one "sculpted," as they termed it

in Milltown. There was a fern society, and a literary club. While chromos were welcomed in Milltown, and were fast replacing masterpieces in hair, weeping-willows over tombstones, and oil paintings, the work of that man who founded the horse-car school of painting, Dornfield had passed chromos, and had made rapid strides toward higher art. If our aim was not to describe a most exciting episode in the history of the two towns, we should be tempted to delay here, and dilate upon certain ideas of evolution in art, and to frame a theory upon the possible extinction of chromos by the survival of the fittest in art. The contrasts presented by the two towns would give us much material. Our psychological instincts, too, are greatly excited ; but we must leave all this to another pen. There had been several books written in Dornfield, which, if they had not astonished the world, had given a tone to society in this little village, and a local reputation to the authors, which must have satisfied some of the most ardent longings of an author's nature. These books were mainly on religious topics : one was framed after Gott-hold's "Emblems," and described the thoughts which occurred to the authoress in wandering through the beautiful lanes embowered in elm-trees. These trees immediately were fraught with literary interest ; and, if the stranger had

never heard of the book, he immediately read it during his first week in Dornfield, before he made many calls. Dornfield was connected by delicate threads with even Venice, Florence, and Rome ; for the cousins of Dornfield people were always travelling, and they wrote circular letters. Besides the highly cultivated people in Dornfield, there were simple country folk, who raised chickens and vegetables for the Milltown market, and kept a few city boarders in the summer on the surplus. There were also a few tradespeople, who did business in Milltown, but who lived in Dornfield. In a community so constituted, it was natural that there should be cliques and sets. The Dornfield magnates were supremely happy in a certain exclusiveness ; and the Milltown folks felt their hearts warm as they thought of their own hospitable and liberal democratic ways. Indeed, Milltown was like a bit of the prosperous West transported to New England soil, and placed in juxtaposition with a community of an academic town.

Such were the towns of Milltown and Dornfield at the time Grandhurst arrived upon the scene. He was a young man of twenty-six, who had spent the last ten years of his life abroad, and had just returned to engage in a profession in his native country. Before settling down, he had run down to Dornfield to see Mr. Tom

Milton, a rich man, who was the warmest friend of his late father. When the train arrived at Milltown, Grandhurst immediately perceived that there was some great excitement: the platform was covered with young men and boys, many of whom were dressed in base-ball costumes. Shout upon shout rent the air. Presently a young man was mounted upon the shoulders of the crowd, and, preceded by boys beating drums and gongs, he was carried at a run up the village street.

“What is the excitement?” asked Grandhurst, as he stepped upon the platform.

“A goose-egg!” shouted the man, as he ran.

“Some more of this American slang, I suppose,” said Grandhurst, pulling his long side-whiskers and elevating his chin.

“I say, look heah, boy, where’s the coach to Dornfield?”

“Hy yah! Hy yah!” answered the boy, leaping up as if to jump through his hands, uttering a shriek, and running off to join the procession.

“Some base-ball nonsense, I suppose,” said Grandhurst, mentally fuming. “The whole town seems to be in a furore. I say, my man, can you tell me how I’m to get to Dornfield?”

The man who was addressed took out a stump of a cigar and pointed up the village street. “Coach starts from the post-office,” said he.

Grandhurst saw that his baggage was safely placed in the depot, and started in the direction indicated. "There is one thing," he muttered to himself, "that they understand better here than on the Continent,—they do understand how to transmit baggage. I wonder where that stage is! Cursed manners these American officials have! Now, in Europe, that fellow on the platform would have touched his hat, and exerted himself for me; but no, he was what they call here 'up and coming,' dying to ask me a dozen questions, I suppose."

The top of the stage-coach was already covered with a crowd of base-ball players; and the inside was apparently full. "Plenty of room in there," replied the driver, in answer to Grandhurst.

"Pretty close quarters," said a base-ball player, crowding to make way for Grandhurst. "Guess we can accommodate a few more; and still they come, boys. There is a lady who wants to go to Dornfield." Amidst shouts of laughter, the hilarious young men crowded to make way for a woman with two bandboxes.

"Can ye take any more in there?" asked the driver; "here's Mrs. Simpson and daughter coming."

"Yes!" shouted the base-ball men: "Mrs. Simpson and daughter, by all means."

"Let me get out!" exclaimed Grandhurst, struggling in a corner of the coach. "This is a regular imposition. Driver, don't you know any better than to put such a crowd on your coach?"

"Who's talking," said the driver, looking down contemptuously.

"We are all talking," answered a self-constituted wit in the inside.

"I am talking!" said Grandhurst, in a loud voice. "I've paid for a seat to Dornfield, and want my money's-worth. You have no business to crowd the interior of your coach so."

"You had a seat, didn't yer?" said the driver, while a dozen heads craned over the top of the coach to witness the excitement.

"No!" thundered Grandhurst.

"Ye wa'n't smart, then. Whoa! whoa! Come, hop on somewhere: I can't stop."

"I'll prosecute you to the extent of the law!" said Grandhurst, in a towering rage.

The entire stage-load of young men set up a loud whistle. "What's that the chap says?" asked the driver, starting up his horses.

"He says he will have the law on ye, and eat you alive, and make you pay the costs," shouted the wit.

"I'll resk him; he had as good a chance as any of ye. I'm a tough one."

"That you are, Billy," remarked Ned Black,

the captain of the nine, whom the crowd had carried about on their shoulders. The stage rapidly disappeared in a cloud of dust, leaving Grandhurst standing on the curbstone.

“Ye ought to have gone on with the boys,” remarked a tall Yankee, who was sitting on the piazza in front of the post-office. “You’d had a fust-rate, jolly ride; those fellows are in high humor, and they’ll sing splendidly on the way. They are feeling fine, I tell ye. Beat us bad.”

“I’ll make that driver smart for this!” exclaimed Grandhurst.

“He wa’n’t to blame,” replied the man. “Bless ye, they will crowd in.”

“That’s the way they manage in this country!” exclaimed Grandhurst; “and if a man stands up for his rights, the insolent official is backed up by the ignorant crowd. Now, in England or France, such an outrage as this would never be permitted. Oh, I’ll make him smart for this yet!”

“See: where did ye come from?” asked the man, with an air of interest.

“France, last,” replied Grandhurst, curtly.

“See: they’ve had another fight over there lately, haven’t they?”

“Yes, several. Now, can you tell me how I’m to get to Dornfield?”

“Waal, I guess my boy can carry you over.

I 'll see." Thus saying, the tall Yankee slowly arose, and disappeared towards the rear of the post-office. In a few moments he returned, with a boy who led an old horse which was attached to a country wagon ; and Grandhurst, making his terms, was slowly conveyed towards that village. His driver informed him that the Milltown baseball nine had beaten one game, and the Dornfield nine had just won one, and that there was still one more game to be played. Grandhurst was irritated, and listened with a deaf ear to the volume of intelligence which his companion opened before him. He saw the coach roll on ahead, the men on top waving handkerchiefs and flags, while, as they neared Dornfield, people ran out from farm-houses along the road, and stopped the stage to hear the news. The boy drove past the stage at length, and entered a fine avenue, just before the road branched to go to the main street of the village. As they drove up the avenue, he pointed out to Grandhurst Mr. Milton's fine mansion, standing at the head of an English-like lawn.

CHAPTER II.

MOONLIGHT.

GRANDHURST found a group of villagers upon the veranda, talking in an excited manner to a young lady, whom he supposed must be Miss Molly Milton, the niece of Mr. Tom Milton. The young lady immediately came forward as he alighted, and greeted him by name.

"We expected you yesterday!" she exclaimed, "and sent our man to the depot."

"Uncle Tom, this is Mr. Grandhurst," said she, turning to a well-preserved old gentleman who at that moment came down the staircase.

"Mr. Grandhurst, happy to see you. Afraid you had given up your proposed visit. You've arrived at an exciting moment, sir."

"I should judge so. Great news, I hear."

"Oh, great!" replied the old gentleman, rubbing his hands with glee, while his eyes twinkled with delight. "You see, Mr. Grandhurst, that we live at a distance from the great centres, and must have our rumpus occasionally. Well*

now, sir, it was an extraordinary match, all agree. Our boys covered themselves with glory. Fond of base ball? Like cricket better! Now, I don't. There is something about base ball that stirs the blood even in my old veins. It's our national game, sir. That is the reason I go for it. Well, when did you get home? You've been ten years"—

"Here they come!" cried a small boy, who rushed up the avenue without any hat, his cheeks like two jacqueminot roses. "A goose-egg!" he gasped, as he ran at full speed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Milton. "Bobbie, where are they? I don't see them!"

"I run ahead!" gasped Bobbie. "They're coming on the old stage. I cut across Deacon Somers's grain-field, and got here first."

"Bobbie Snevel!" cried Miss Milton. "How could you cut across Deacon Somers's nice field? You know he will be enraged."

"Well, I know, but I couldn't help it. There were the fellars on the stage-coach, singing and shouting,—old Milliken's grays for leaders; and I wanted to get here fust."

"Don't do so again," said Miss Milton, patting his red cheeks with her soft hand.

"Goose-egg, do you hear, Mr. Grandhurst!" exclaimed Mr. Milton. "Come, let's get out the flag, and all stand ready to give three cheers as they come up."

At that moment the stage burst into view at the end of the avenue. The ball men waved their bats, to which they had tied their handkerchiefs. The little bewhiskered driver, with his hands full of reins and his right foot on the brake, urged his horses down the slope which led into a little ravine at some distance from the house. Milliken's grays dashed on, with their nostrils expanded and their manes flying wildly in the air. "Hurrah!" shouted the men on the coach. "Hurrah!" replied the group on the veranda. Crack! sounded the whip of the driver. The old coach creaked and clucked and rumbled. The chains and hooks of the harness jingled together. "Hurrah! hurrah!" cried the ball men again. "Hooray!" shouted Mr. Milton, in the utmost enthusiasm. "High!" ejaculated the driver; and the leaders, flying through the little ravine, bounded up the avenue, followed by the patient horses at the pole at full gallop, were reined up in a masterly manner in front of the Milton mansion. "This is glorious, boys!" exclaimed Mr. Milton. "Come, get down: you've covered yourselves with renown. Put up your horses, driver; and all of you come in and have some refreshments."

"Gimme your bats," cried Bobbie, embracing the one already in his possession as a lord-mayor might his mace. "Where's the ball?"

“Here,” said Ned Black, the captain of the nine, tossing it to the enthusiastic boy.

“That’s the ball!” said Bobbie, showing it in triumph to Miss Milton.

“Well, fellows, you really did famously,” said a young man, with white down-like whiskers, advancing from the group of village people who had congregated. “I should think that you would be completely exhausted; it has been a fearfully hot day for May.”

“O Dick! were you really out to-day?” said Miss Milton, in a sarcastic tone. “I supposed you would spend it in your hammock. Really, you showed great courage in exposing yourself.”

“It *was* brave, wasn’t it,” replied Mr. Richard Softy, with a drawl; “but I put some fern leaves in my hat, and managed to pull through.”

“Thank you very much for coming to see the match, Dick,” said Ned Black, extending his hand in a manly way to Dick.

“Aw! feel deeply thankful that my efforts were appreciated,” said Mr. Dick Softy, accepting the proffered hand; and the two young men swung round each other in a comical way before Miss Milton.

“Mr. Softy,” said Miss Milton to Mr. Grandhurst, after the formalities of the introduction had taken place, “believes that we are all a little crazy, and would that all the world might

take to hammocks a while. He doesn't like to have the quiet of this pastoral neighborhood invaded by the fierce and dangerous excitement of a base-ball conflict. He sees floating before his eyes the maimed fingers and the blackened visages ;—but come, I 'm not going to expose you, Dick. I must go in and help uncle entertain."

The company followed their host and hostess through the large hall to the dining-room, where a bountiful table was set. The base-ball men were still clad in their costumes of gray, with the letter D, standing for Dornfield, upon their breasts. Their faces were red from the fierce contest and the hot sun, and they ate the ice-cream with great relish. Mr. Tom Milton stood at the head of the table, looking like an emperor. His cheery voice rang out above the clatter of the dishes and the roar of many voices. "Tom Handy, pass your glass ! have some more champagne. Send up the boys' glasses ! Ned Black, look out for your men. See to it that they are as valiant at the table as they are on the ball-field. Sam Smith, have another plate of the salad. What ! you 've given in. Never do ! never do ! Molly," he whispered to his niece, "tell Ned Black to look out for Pat O'Callahan, and see that he doesn't have too much champagne. Come, Mr. Grandhurst, join

in! You've arrived on the soil of Dornfield just in time. We are going to have a reception and village *fête* this evening. Grounds illuminated, and so forth. Won't have any thing more, hey? Well, come, I want to show you my pictures."

Ernest Grandhurst followed his host through the crowd of village people who were accepting the rich man's hospitality. Their progress was extremely slow ; for Mr. Milton stopped repeatedly to shake hands with everybody, and to urge them to be as merry as possible. At length they emerged from the throng, and entered the library.

"Nice old fireplace, this," said Grandhurst, leaning on his cane with his gloved hand, and pointing with the other to the tall brass and-irons.

"I like it. Now, I want to show you my pictures. You are a judge: seen the best in Europe. Now, there's a portrait of my mastiff, — Prince. I call that good; don't you? Perfect likeness, — perfect likeness, sir!"

"Who is the painter?" asked Grandhurst, smoothing his brown beard from under his chin, and waving his cane in a connoisseur-like manner over the outlines of the picture.

"Smith, sir. Fine painter. An American."

Grandhurst ejaculated, "Hum — ha," in an

undertone, and followed his host to his next treasure.

“This is a landscape by Brown: also an American. I believe in encouraging native talent. Bless us! if we are not Americans, what are we? Fine touches there. See that mist on the hill!”

Grandhurst said it reminded him very slightly of Ruysdael, with a preponderance in his accent upon the “very.”

“Hurrah! hurrah!” came floating out from the dining-room.

“Ha, ha! they are still at it,” chuckled Mr. Milton.

“Now, here’s a statue by a young American of a minute-man at Concord. Glorious, I say! Look at that costume and that resolute face!”

Grandhurst put on his eye-glasses, and walked about the figure, surveying it with a calm, critical eye.

“It’s national, isn’t it?” said Mr. Milton. “Bless me, I’ve heard my grandmother describe just such a fellow: how he left his plow, took his old musket, and went to battle. Depend upon it, this country has got lots of talent. Now, I call that magnificent; don’t you?”

Grandhurst thought that the *animus* of the sculptor was good; but there was no concealing the fact that America was still in the Dark Ages.

in regard to art. Mr. Milton did not reply ; for at that moment his niece came into the library, and asked him to take her place for a while in the dining-room. The old gentleman put his hand affectionately upon her shoulder, and left her with Grandhurst.

“ Well, Mr. Grandhurst,” said she, after some commonplaces had been exchanged, “ how does America seem, after such a long residence in Europe ? ”

“ Very crude,” said he, seating himself gracefully on the lounge, after Miss Milton had taken a comfortable arm-chair.

“ Every thing seems inartistic, and in the rough, I suppose.”

“ I find much in Boston,” replied Grandhurst, “ that is enjoyable ; there is really some feeling there for high art and literature : but New York is a topsy-turvy place. Wants a strainer, and two centuries of some refining process.”

“ Well, we depend on men like you, the flower of our youth, educated abroad, to come home and strain us. I’m going to have a *féte champêtre* this afternoon and evening ; and, although we can’t compete in picturesqueness with village festivals in Normandy, for instance, still we are going to have a real American good time. I hope you will like it.” A sudden demand was made upon her at that moment, and she excused herself.

"Fine-looking girl. Some good points about all these things here, too. But every thing is raw! Hum, hum! By the way, what an absurd fuss this is over some cracked base-ball players! If it were only cricket, you know,—but base ball, rounders, and that sort of thing! I'll go down and call on my old friends the Silvers, and go to this *fête* in the evening." Thus saying, he went to the room which the man-servant told him had been assigned to him, and prepared himself for making a call.

In the dining-room there was great jollity. Toasts were rapidly drunk to the successful nine. Mr. Milton exhorted Ned Black to look out for Pat O'Callahan, the pitcher, who had an unfortunate liking for the bottle. Presently Pat began to remember some grievances of the late match: Bob Twillery had run against him, and Sam Greene had trodden on his toes, and Ned Black had called him by some opprobrious epithet. He began to grumble, and shake his fists, and draw deep breaths through his nostrils.

"If it hadn't been for me, chaps, ye'd have been sorry off! It takes an Irish boy to show ye Americans how to win. An' didn't I take a hot one from Smithy's bat? An', Bob Franklin, why didn't ye catch that ball I sent ye?"

"Come, Pat," said Ned Black, "let us have a talk in the library about the next match."

"All right," said the pitcher, giving a parting glare at his associates, and following the captain.

"Sorry! sorry!" said Mr. Milton. "It is a pity we can't supply his place on the nine. He is a regular tyrant, and knows how dependent we are on him."

"We can't get along without him," said Sam Smith, the short-stop; "he pitches splendidly, and understands the game thoroughly. We made a mistake, perhaps, in letting him join the nine in the beginning; but now we can't spare him, and he knows it. We have got to stand his browbeating, and pay him well for the afternoons he plays."

"Well, boys, manage him, — manage him," said Mr. Milton. "There's one more game; and we mustn't let the Milltown nine beat us. We can put up with Pat for a little while, for the sake of the victory."

Ned Black, after safely sending off Pat in a carriage for his humble lodgings, came back to the library, where he found Miss Milton and Richard Softy.

"Mr. Softy has just been telling me of your famous batting," said she to Ned, with a beaming smile. "It must have been a glorious game."

"Well, it was a good game," said the captain of the nine. "Dick, what in the world were you trying to do when that foul ball struck into the crowd?"

"Get out of the way, of course," replied Mr. Dick Softy.

Miss Milton bent her large, blue eyes inquiringly upon Dick.

"Foul balls dangerous, you know," drawled that young man. "Deuced. Something like boomerangs: curl round your head, and pop into your eyes."

"Mr. Black, can't you get Mr. Softy into your nine?" asked Miss Milton, with a turn of her proud lip.

"Yas, yas; put me in as a short-stop," drawled Mr. Softy. "I'll be true to the words."

Ned Black bent his fine gray eyes upon the beautiful young lady for an instant, and then turned away his head.

"I envied you your comfortable umbrella, Dick, and your havelock," said Ned Black. "At one time it was very hot, or I felt especially so after that home run."

"By George, didn't you!" said Dick Softy. "I knew you wanted to be in my shoes."

"In your slippers, I suppose you mean," said Miss Milton, in a tone of raillery; "for I will wager you went to the match in your slippers."

"I believe you are right," replied Dick Softy.

"The idea!" cried Miss Milton, with a hearty laugh.

"Most excellent one," retorted Dick, with a

humorous smile. "It was a hot day, and I was thoroughly comfortable in them."

"Did you go in your dressing-gown, too?"

"Didn't think of it."

"Oh, what a pity!" cried Miss Milton. "But, Mr. Black, I notice that you have injured your hand. Oh, dear! it's really quite a severe accident. Let me get some court-plaster, or some bandages."

"Oh, it's nothing!" said Ned Black, "only what a very hot ball did."

"I call it a great deal," said Miss Milton, bending her graceful figure over the hand, and examining it with great care.

"It was real plucky in you to stop that ball, Ned," drawled Dick Softy. "I wouldn't have touched it for the world."

"Of course not," said Miss Milton, looking at him scornfully. "I declare, I never knew a man so proud of not being muscular as you are."

"I'm cultivating my mind and a pair of lovely whiskers," said Dick.

"I should judge so, in regard to the whiskers," said Miss Milton, with a laugh; and she glided out of the room to get the court-plaster.

Ned Black walked about the room during her absence, with a self-assured air, gazing curiously at the rich furniture, and trolling a manly

song, while Mr. Dick Softy reclined comfortably on the lounge, watching him with an apparently mild look out of his girl-like eyes. Presently, Dick arose, and strolled out of the room. He looked into the dining-room: it was nearly deserted. Old Mr. Milton stood at the end of the room talking with Mr. Graham, the president of the Dornfield bank. The domestics and the men-servants were busily engaged in putting up Chinese lanterns on the trees in the lawn; and preparations were pushed forward for the coming *fête champêtre*.

“That was a high old game, wasn’t it?” said a merry voice behind him. The young man turned and saw Bobbie Snevel.

“First-rate,” replied Dick.

“I thought we were going to be whipped this time. It was all Pat O’Callahan’s pitching and Ned Black’s catching, wasn’t it? The other fellows made lots of blunders. Didn’t Sam Green muff, though,—regular old muff. I didn’t like Ned Black’s running against that little Smithers on the Milltown nine. Fellers say that he did it on purpose to make the Milltown nine put another man on first base.”

“Oh, no, that’s slander!” said Dick Softy; “couldn’t be.”

“I don’t think it could, nuther: he hurt Smithers.”

Bobbie Snelvel walked sturdily beside his companion, tossing a base ball from one hand to the other, and occasionally putting one hand behind his back and tossing the ball in a dexterous manner over his shoulder. "Come," said he, at length, "give me a fly, won't you?"

"I dawn't believe I can throw a ball, Bobbie."

"Oh, my! of course you can. There, that's fust-rate! By! you can throw, can't you? Phew! that's a hot one. How far can you throw, any way? My gracious! you can throw as well as Ned Black, and you hain't ever said any thing about it. Why don't you play?"

"Oh, it's too much of a bore, Bobbie. Gets your fingers all knocked up, and eyes blackened, and nose broken."

"Oh, but the fun, you know! Fellers think you are soft; but I like you, any way," said the boy, cuddling close to the young man.

Dick Softy's eyes glistened, and he put his arm about the little fellow. One of the base-ball nine at that moment ran down the avenue, and Bobbie, in a fit of hero-worship, left his companion and hastened after the ball-player.

Dick Softy looked at his watch,—it wanted two hours of the time appointed for the *fête*. He walked rapidly to his lodgings. He looked longingly at his hammock, and a new novel which was on the table; but he resolutely took

off his coat, put on a light gymnasium costume, and repaired to the garret of his house. This place he had fitted up with various appliances. In one corner was a great, stuffed meal-bag, which he pommelled, standing before it with the left foot advanced, and his hands well in play before his breast. From the middle of the roof-tree hung a heavy ball, by a long hempen cord. Seizing this with one hand, he flung it with all his might in various directions, and caught it on its furious returns. Twice the ball wound its cord about his waist like a snake, and thumped him fearfully on the breast; but, in no wise daunted, he kept up the exercise. Tired of the ball, he then took up a pair of Indian clubs, and swung them hither and thither, with short arm and extended arm. Having sufficiently practised his arms and shoulders, he took to rising and sinking on one leg in rapid succession, looking with great satisfaction at the growing prominence of his muscles. Then he tied a ten-pound weight to one foot, and, lying on his back, extended and drew in his leg, after the manner of the piston-rod of a steam-engine. This he did with both limbs, and then paused to examine an anatomical diagram. Apparently satisfied with the process he had taken to bring out the leg muscles, he finished his exercise with a cold bath.

Grandhurst, in the mean while, had paid his visit to the Silvers. "You find our little village in a state of great excitement, Mr. Grandhurst," said Mrs. Silver. "Our base-ball nine have played two matches with the nine of Milltown, and both nines have won one game; so that there is one more to be played to decide the championship."

"Really, you have revived the spirit of the Olympian games," replied Mr. Grandhurst. "I find that young and old are intensely excited. The Miltons were enthusiastic in their reception of the players."

"Dreadful tiresome, this base-ball enthusiasm!" groaned Mr. Silver, from his arm-chair. "Dreadful! Can't understand it. It's all of a piece with the American character,—every thing by extremes. Now, these young chaps who play are exhausting their vitality in a shocking way,—perfectly shocking! I wonder how old Tom Milton, who is an eminently respectable old gentleman, can be so interested, and allow that niece of his to be so wild over base-ball players."

"She is a sort of Di Vernon, isn't she?" asked Ernest Grandhurst.

"Fine girl," remarked Mrs. Silver, meditatively, looking at her rings.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Silver, waving his hand in an aristocratic manner. "Fine girl; but she

lacks reserve. She goes romping round with that little Bobbie Snel, and understands all the affairs of this base-ball nine as well as one of the players ; works them flags ; ties up their broken fingers ; and bets on them, for aught I know."

"O Francis ! don't be too severe," said Mrs. Silver, with a laugh.

"I've depicted her just as she is," replied her husband. "Tom Milton ought to send her abroad ; he is making a mistake. But he says, 'Lord bless you ! Molly is a pure specimen of a downright Yankee girl, and I'm proud of her ! She hasn't any nonsense and *parlez vous* about her.'"

"Ha, ha !" laughed Grandhurst. "Good people to study. I shall be curious to analyze her. She strikes me as a person who is suffering from a volcano of feelings. Has she any literary or artistic tastes ?"

"No, I think not," said Mrs. Silver ; "but the Hovers, in Worcester,—who, you know, are very literary,—think every thing of her."

"Well, Ernest, to change the subject," said Mr. Silver, "are you going to settle down in this crude, going-to-ruin republic ?"

"I am afraid I shall exhaust its capabilities very soon," said Grandhurst. "I do not find myself in the mood to put my shoulder to the

muddy wheel. This life is so short, that I fear the time will not come, in my lifetime, when America will be toned down so as not to shock my tastes. I fear that it will be economy in me to go back to Europe ; for I find there what my tastes require. Every thing is so crude here."

"It is, truly," sighed Mr. Silver, folding his white, well-kept hands ; "and I believe that we are going to the dogs. Just look at the corruption at Washington. No decent man will go into politics. Look at the tone of the public press. Why, I've given up reading American papers, and confine myself to the 'Spec~~t~~ator' and the 'Athenæum.' I used to write ; but I don't now. You've got to write down for the American public. And, then, look at the degraded taste for art you find here. It will need two centuries of refining processes. And, as you say, we who are accustomed to better things had better go where our tastes can be gratified."

"You remember, Mr. Grandhurst," said Mrs. Silver, "that delightful home we had in Florence. How could we have left it ! But, then, affairs took a sudden turn, and we found ourselves condemned to this little American village. However, we endeavor to create an art atmosphere among ourselves. And, then, we are in constant receipt of letters from abroad : Mrs.

Rogers writes me every week from Rome. Have you heard of her receptions this past winter?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Grandhurst; "you are aware that I left Rome in the middle of the season."

"Oh, to be sure. Well, Francis, we shall make the most of Mr. Grandhurst while he remains with us, sha'n't we? Now, we must prepare for the Miltons'—what shall we call it?" said she, with a comical uplifting of the eyebrows.

"Base-ball feast," said her husband.

When the Silvers and Grandhurst set out, it was in the early twilight, and the Chinese lanterns on the spacious grounds of the Miltons presented a brilliant appearance. On an arch over the main entrance was inscribed "Victory," in large letters formed of red roses. Ernest Grandhurst tossed his head as he passed under it, and the Silvers laughed in a very aristocratic way. A party of young men were preparing fireworks upon the lawn. Bobbie Snelvel was running hither and thither, on a thousand commissions; and the grounds were already dotted with guests. Old Mr. Milton stood on the piazza with his niece, welcoming every one in a hearty manner, and continually exhorting a band of music to strike up, whenever there was too long a pause. The musicians—who were en-

sconced behind a group of flowering white azaleas — smiled at the old man's enthusiasm, and almost blew their lungs out, between their hearty potations of beer. Over the front-door of the house were grouped a collection of base-ball bats around the word "Goose-egg." Miss Milton received the Silvers and Mr. Grandhurst with great cordiality. She wore a blue sash: for blue was the color of the Dornfield nine. The lawn was soon covered by the gay promenaders. The base-ball men were the favorites among the young ladies, and, indeed, were the observed of all beholders. Ned Black, the captain of the nine, was very marked in his attentions to Miss Milton; and she did not seem displeased. She held a base ball in her hand, and continually threw it at some valiant player, who caught it and threw it back, when she jumped quickly behind Ned Black, holding her hands up with sportiveness, while the captain of the nine caught the ball.

Dick Softy promenaded the lawn with Miss Rose Snelvel, Bobbie Snelvel's pretty sister. She had large, blue eyes, which were continually watching Ned Black and Miss Milton. Dick Softy's eyes, also, were always turned in the same direction. They carried on a desultory conversation together, continually keeping, by a strange chance, in the immediate proximity of Miss Mil-

ton, and protected from the observation of the latter by the hedge of arbor-vitæ. Here were two young people,—one a sentimental young man, the other a pure, young girl, as fresh as a rose,—walking in the sweet June twilight, disturbing the early sleep of a thousand bright flowers in the old garden, beneath the glowing evening sky, with its one bright star just over the woodbine-covered high wall. Why should they not have whispered sweet things to each other? Alas! they were not mated. Fates should have made it,—Dick Softy and Molly Milton; Ned Black and Rose Snelvè: so their hearts said.

Presently a loud dinner-bell was heard, and then one of the musicians sounded a *reveille* on a bugle. The gay company hurried to the place where Mr. Milton stood, flourishing a piece of paper in the air.

“Attention!” cried the old gentleman, in a sturdy voice. “I’ve just received a telegram from the Hon. Charles Mimmer, our representative to Congress. Shall I read it?”

“Read it! Hear, hear!” cried a hundred voices.

“Well, here it is,” said Mr. Milton, clearing his throat:—

“‘CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON.

“‘Congratulations to the Dornfield nine; the news of their great victory resounds at the Capitol of the nation.

“‘CHARLES MIMMER.’”

"Hooray! hooray!" shouted the hundred voices; and six fire-rockets rent the air in a blaze of sparks, and the band struck up "Hail Columbia." After the excitement had subsided, Mr. Tom Milton announced that supper was ready; and the guests rushed joyously into the dining-room.

"Think we are a crazy set, hey! Mr. Grandhurst?" said the old gentleman, accosting the young traveller. "No doubt you do; but we must have a blow-out occasionally. Nature requires it; does the system good. You said, I believe, that you don't like a base-ball match? Don't particularly, hey? Now, I do; pretty game! I watch it like a boy; makes me thrill through and through; wish I were young again. Ha, ha! Then, Mr. Grandhurst, there's a reason in our madness. The Milltown folks are very uppish, and try to run ahead of us quiet Dornfield folks in every thing. They got the branch railroad through their town, and left us out in the cold. But we can beat 'em at base ball. Baslee, the president of the Milltown Excelsior Mills, has high bets on the result of the next game, and pays the players in the Milltown nine great salaries. Then there's Jackson over there, too. Jackson and I were old rivals in business,—rivals in every thing. Good whist-player: so am I. Always got beaten, however, when Jack-

son played. Now, he swears that the Milltown nine shall beat Tom Milton's nine. Bless you ! it isn't my nine. The whole village takes an interest in it. Perhaps I make it a little easier for the chaps to play : that's all."

"This is a new phase of American life," said Ernest Grandhurst ; "I am interested in studying it."

"Lord bless you, sir, enjoy it ; don't study it. You mustn't analyze every thing. What's the fragrance of a rose, when you analyze it. The chemists can make the same odor out of coal-tar. Enjoy life, sir ; that's my maxim."

Ernest Grandhurst smiled graciously, and accompanied his hale host to the dining-room. Presently he extricated himself from the crowd and joined Mr. and Mrs. Silver, who were in the library, examining the art treasures of the Milltons.

"Shocking affair!" exclaimed Mr. Francis Silver, pointing with his gloved hand at a study of a head by Jones.

"Here is a photograph from a Rossetti!" exclaimed Mrs. Silver ; "and here is a Burne Jones! Why, I declare, how did they get into this house?"

"Fine grotesqueness there," said Ernest Grandhurst, holding the photographs at the level of his right ear, and looking at them sideways.

Mr. Francis Silver pointed with his cane at a design for a soldier's monument for Dornfield ; and the three laughed internally.

“Dreadful! dreadful!” sighed Mr. Silver. “Fanny, we can only escape the fate of being obliged to gaze upon this village obelisk, by going to Europe.”

“Oh, they won’t put it up ! Do you think they will ?” said Mrs. Silver.

“Old Tom Milton will have his own way,” replied Mr. Silver. “He is bent upon having something national in art, as he says ; and believes in encouraging native talent. ‘If it is not so good as European work,’ he says, ‘why, it’s done by our own American fingers, and there’s merit in that.’”

“Ha, ha, ha !” laughed Grandhurst. “Isn’t it devilish strange ! — beg pardon, Mrs. Silver, — but isn’t it odd, you know ? Ah ! Miss Milton,” said he, upon that young lady’s sudden entrance, — “your *fête* is a brilliant success.”

“Could you get any refreshments ?” said Miss Milton, giving one hand to Mrs. Silver and the other to Mr. Silver. “Every one is so enthusiastic, and hungry in consequence, that I’m afraid you could not get near the supper-table.”

“Oh, we succeeded very well, — very well indeed,” said Mrs. Silver.

“Just think,—a goose-egg ! Isn’t it glorious !”

exclaimed the young lady. "I never saw Uncle Tom so exhilarated."

"He really enjoys it, doesn't he," said Mrs. Silver, with a sweet smile, and with a look of admiration at the fresh beauty of Miss Milton.

"Oh, we all do. I think it's glorious ! perfectly splendid ! Now, do have a good time, won't you ? I've got to look out for the boys, and see that they have a good time. They've earned it, I'm sure." Thus saying, with a graceful courtesy, she skipped out of the room.

"Glorious creature !" exclaimed Mrs. Silver.

"She's a study for you, Ernest," said Mr. Silver, with a languid air. "You ought to see her riding about town in a pony-wagon, generally with a base-ball player in the basket-seat of the footman. She knows all the dogs in town, and whistles them after her."

"I'm curious to see what there is beneath this gay, hoydenish exterior," said Grandhurst.

"You must beware," laughed Mrs. Silver, "or you will be numbered among the slain."

While the Silvers thus sat conversing in the library, the festivities were at their height. The soft moon had risen, and its light streamed over the lawn, lighting up the dresses of the ladies, and contrasting its silvery radiance with the ruddy glare of the Chinese lanterns. The lofty elms seemed to be wrapped in a sleep full of

dreams of some fairy festival which was being held beneath their shades. Presently the voices of the Dornfield Glee Club, led by the manly voice of Ned Black, attracted the guests beneath the balcony of the old mansion. They sang of youth and beauty in the soft, warm air,— in the bright moonlight,— while lovers and maidens listened with palpitating hearts, and the old smiled sadly at the remembrance of their own youth.

Miss Milton, at length, leaving her guests to amuse themselves, took Richard Softy's arm, and promenaded in the moonlight.

“Don't you feel exhausted by your labors this afternoon, Dick ?” said she.

“Awful spent !” exclaimed her companion. “Took a nap, however, before I came ; feel all right now.”

“Dick !” exclaimed Miss Milton, drawing her arm reproachfully from his, and surveying him in the moonlight, “I'm ashamed of you !”

“Bless me, what now !” exclaimed the young man, twisting his moustache.

“Why are you not on the nine ?” said Miss Milton, almost tearfully.

“Heavens ! they don't want me ; and I can live very comfortably without base ball. Deused awkward, you know, to go through life with only one eye, and fingers like potato-balls.”

"If I were a man," said Miss Milton, "I'd play my part; and, if base ball were the part, I would play until all my fingers were as crooked as an eagle's claw."

"But the deuce of it is, base ball isn't my part," said her companion.

"What is your part?" exclaimed Miss Milton, sarcastically. "To read novels in a hammock, and go to matches in slippers. Now, Dick, why didn't you go in a flowered dressing-gown too?"

"Now, Miss Molly, don't let's quarrel this fine night, when the jolly old moon, and all the rest of 'em, look so serene."

"All the rest of 'em aint so very serene; for I'm mad with you, Dick Softy. — There!"

"Dreadful sorry; but *I'm* perfectly serene and lovely."

"You anger me beyond measure, Dick!" exclaimed his companion, turning her back upon him, and plucking a rose to pieces.

"My dear, — my dear Miss Molly! here I am, down on my knees."

"Yes: right in my uncle's tulip-bed! Oh, won't he be mad!"

"Bless me!" exclaimed the young man, jumping up, and looking at the devastation he had caused.

"I thought I heárd you scream," Miss Milton, said Ned Black, advancing at that moment from behind the hedge. "Are you unwell?"

"Not in the least: I was only alarmed at the appearance of my uncle's tulip-bed. Mr. Black, I want you to show me the illuminated fountain?"

"Most happy," said the captain of the nine, with a look of triumph at Dick Softy; and he walked gallantly off, with Miss Milton hanging upon his arm.

Richard Softy's mild face looked disturbed; but he felt of his arm, and, as if reassured by the growth of his muscles, thrust his hands into his pockets, and looked after Ned Black with a look which might have made that young man feel uncomfortable coming from any one but Dick Softy.

"Ned Black, we've some old scores to pay off," whispered the good-humored young man to himself, with a glitter in his eyes. "She's mad with me, is she?" said he to himself; "I didn't think she cared enough for me, to be mad with me."

He was interrupted in his meditations by the sound of voices just behind the hedge, which he recognized to be those of Miss Rose Snel and her brother Bobbie.

"Well, Bobbie, run along," said Miss Snel; "I can walk about alone. You want to see the fountain, and I'm too tired; I think I shall find a seat somewhere."

"Don't s'pose I would leave you alone, do you?" said Bob, valiantly. "I'd like to thrash Ned Black."

"Sh! sh! don't," exclaimed his sister.

"He hasn't paid you any attention this evening, and I'd like to know what sort of a fellar he is, any way!" continued her little brother, in a thick voice.

"Hush! you know he is captain of the nine, and has to superintend a good many things," said his sister.

"He is a splendid captain, though, aint he, Rose?"

"Yes," answered his sister, with what seemed a groan to the kind heart of Dick Softy, who immediately emerged from his concealment and accosted the two.

"Miss Snelv," said he, "I'm delighted to find you; I know where there is a charming seat, up in the crotch of an old elm. Have you seen it? No! Why, let's go, by all means. I hope no one is there. Bobbie, you run off and enjoy yourself. I'll take care of your sister."

"That's first-rate," said Bob. "Rose, you won't mind?"

"No," said his sister, with a faint smile. "If Mr. Softy wants to go, after showing me the seat in the elm, I will wait for you in the library."

Her brother hastened away, shouting some-

thing resembling the Swiss Yodel, which was taken up by his youthful companions in the distance. And Rose, taking Dick Softy's arm, was conducted through the old garden to the elms. Mr. Milton had discovered the capabilities of the ancient trunk of a lordly elm, and had built a little arbor in its spreading branches, high above the ground. A rustic spiral stairway led up to it, which went by the name of the *Mauvais Pas*. It was no more dangerous than its namesake. But Mr. Milton had threatened, for several years, to take it down, fearing lest some accident might happen. Dick Softy assisted his pretty charge up the stairway, carefully preceding her; and the two went in and out of the patches of shade thrown athwart the venerable limbs of the elm by its branches in the moonlight. Finally they emerged upon a broad landing of rustic-work, and seated themselves in the airy arbor.

“Isn't this delightful!” exclaimed Rose. “Oh, I'm so much obliged to you for bringing me! See how fairy-like the people look, wandering over the lawn, beneath the festoons of Chinese lanterns!”

“Jolly sort of place, isn't it?” said Dick, sinking with a sigh into a kind of arm-chair made by the branches of the old tree.

“I wonder who those lovers are,” said Rose, pointing at an apparently affectionate couple who

promenaded beneath the branches of the elm, in the obscurity of its shade.

"I wonder," said Dick, craning his neck over the tree-trunk.

Presently the couple stopped at the foot of the tree, and were about to mount the stairway. Dick Softy coughed loudly, and, looking down with Rose Snel, saw the beautiful face of Miss Milton upturned, and Ned Black beside her.

"There's some one up there!" said Ned Black, in a low voice. "Come, let's go down the Linden Walk;" and the two disappeared in the direction of the avenue.

Dick Softy hummed a tune, and hit at the leaves of the elm, which were within reach, with his light, flexible cane; and his companion, turning her face away, gazed pensively at the full moon, which swung, like a great, silver balloon, over the rounded masses of trees down the avenue. Presently there were signs of the party's breaking up. A throng of people wended their way homeward, and teams began to drive up for their owners. Dick Softy assisted his charge down the steep stairway, and, as he did so, noticed a tear in her bright eye.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROSE OF DORNFIELD.

THE Rose of Dornfield, as Miss Snel was called, was in her most beautiful state of unfolding. She was, indeed, a lovely creature.

Most girls of her age, and especially of her attractions, would have been much in society, both at home and abroad ; but there were peculiar circumstances in the home of the Snel's, which none but its inmates could understand. The neighbors strove to bring the Snels out ; and, somewhat piqued at their failure, began to criticise. " Rose was, indeed, a beautiful girl ; but extremely reserved and uppish,— full of moods, too. They say that Mr. Snel drinks a great deal ; indeed, he has been seen intoxicated." The young country-fellows found her very sweet and lovely, whenever they were fortunate enough to find her at home, which seemed to be very seldom. Their timid knocks in the evening were generally answered by Mr. Snel, who bent his most aristocratic look upon them, which told the

bashful callers that he instantly divined the reason of their bright neckties and brightly polished boots. Mr. Snelv, on such occasions, generally appeared with gold eye-glasses perched on the end of his nose, a volume of Burke's Speeches in his hand, and, having been repeating a passage of that eloquent author, his voice had a deep intonation, that thrust the timid callers back into the darkness, like the report of a suddenly discharged cannon. Rose was glad to be let alone. She wandered in the woods with her brother, picking wild-flowers ; or floated down the little river, looking at her own reflection in the placid nooks, unmindful of its beauty, dreaming as young girls dream, and building a thousand air-castles. Bobbie was very attentive, and took great pride in showing his sister his skill in managing a boat, and his wood-craft. The two were closely drawn together, and were thoroughly happy in the green woods and fields, far away from the house. Their father generally spent his days in the library, when he was at home, which was not very often ; for, of late, he had taken to visiting an old bachelor friend, who kept an amateur farming establishment a few miles out of Dornfield. If Mr. Snelv had had money, he would also have indulged his tastes for country sports and for gentleman farming. He did the next best thing, and hobnobbed with

his friend, Mr. Bandy. Rose, at first, was glad of her father's intimacy with his friend ; for, although Mr. Snelvel prided himself upon his high-bred, courteous ways in his household, still, whenever the dinner did not suit his tastes, there was a sense of discomfort in the house. Then, too, Bobbie and his father seemed to continually irritate each other. The excess of spirits of the boy seemed to the father to be vulgar. He continually preached about courtesy and high-bred manners, until the boy, with his quick observation of his father's failings, almost suffocated with the desire to retort. "He made you cry, Rose, at the dinner-table," said he, putting his arm about his sister once, after a scene at a poorly cooked dinner. Rose hushed him, and apologized for her father's irritability.

She always let her father in when he returned late ; and, as she buried her face in her pillow, thanked the gentle stars, that twinkled in upon her through the fragrant vines above her window, that she had saved Bobbie the sight of the reeling old man. But the boy had known his father's ways long before his sister, and had concealed his knowledge, hoping, in a despairing way, that his sister might never know. Mr. Bandy was also a very aristocratic member of the Bandy family. He had a very fine establishment, and was much interested in county sports. He had

restocked a large brook which ran through his farm with land-locked salmon, and was a thorough sportsman. His shooting-box, as he termed his farm-house, was really a bachelor's paradise. Every thing had been gathered there which could conduce to comfort. He had a very fine housekeeper, and gave splendid dinners. Mr. Bandy was a portly, well-preserved man of sixty, with manners of the old school. Mr. Snelvel found Mr. Bandy a man after his own heart. One was descended from Sir Henry Bandy, and the other from Sir Richard Snelvel : and the two old gentlemen spent the few hours they were not hunting or feasting in tracing out their genealogical trees ; until, from frequent potations, the two fell off the topmost branches, and grovelled in the dust, from which baser-born mortals never aspired to spring.

The knowledge, kept apart from each other, of their father's failing, drew the children closer together. Their misfortune, indeed, had this sweet compensation : it shut out the world, and made the hours they spent together away from the house seem too precious for words. Mr. Snelvel was very ambitious for Rose. He directed her education with a firm hand. He laid out a course of historical reading, prescribed so much music and so much drawing, in a tabular view that would have done credit to the secretary of

a college. If Rose had followed it, she would have worked from morning to night. It was one of Mr. Snel's great troubles, that Rose and Bobbie did not seem to be intellectual. He was angered that the Snel family should not manifest its well-known brain-power. He feared that Bobbie, especially, would be a disgrace to the name.

So the children grew to have singular ways ; that is, ways which differed from the people about them. Their father was especially angry at this, and wondered why his children acted so much like a brood of partridges. He had frequent conversations with his crony, Mr. Bandy, upon this point, and neither could discover the reason.

“Take 'em to the city ; let your sisters bring out your daughter,” said Mr. Bandy.

“My sisters have both married common, low-born churls,” said Mr. Snel, pulling up his cravat ; “and I have ceased to have any intercourse with them.” He meant, that his sisters had restricted their intercourse.

“Well,” replied Mr. Bandy, watching his cigar-smoke curl upwards, “you've high-bred notions yourself, Snel : just carry 'em out.”

“I'm determined to,” replied Mr. Snel, helping himself liberally to the punch.

Ned Black had broken in upon the seclusion

of the Snevels ; he had noticed the beautiful young girl who hid herself in the old-fashioned pew in church, who modestly shunned observation, and was reserved to the last degree. He had taken many walks in the lane beside her home, in the hope of meeting her. He paid especial attention to Bobbie, whose enthusiasm for base ball had early attracted his attention. Rose noticed the handsome young fellow, and heard her brother's enthusiastic descriptions of his powers as a base-ball player. Once Bobbie had escorted her to the playing-ground ; and she had overheard the remarks of admiration bestowed upon the athlete by young ladies and young gentlemen. How they became acquainted she could hardly remember, for the acquaintance of secret glances had long preceded the actual introduction.

Rose's enjoyment of Ned Black's acquaintance was not without its alloys. Their meetings away from home were very sweet, and a new world of hopes and beautiful thoughts opened to the young girl ; but whenever he came to the house, Mr. Snel contrived, by his extremely courteous ways, to make the young man uncomfortable. Nevertheless, the acquaintance progressed rapidly. There were moonlight walks beside the river, under the elms ; there were strolls in the woods ; there were walks home

from Sunday school. Ned Black always walked to his business-place by the roundabout way which led by the Snelvel's ; and looked up at a particular blind, conscious that two beautiful eyes shone lovingly upon him. The story of the growth of their love would make a theme for a poet. The beauties of the springtime in Dornfield would come in beautifully to make pictures for the artist who should illustrate such a poem. There were moments when she stood leaning over the garden-gate, beneath the roses ; when she trailed up the creeper, standing with lithe arms outstretched in the sweet sunset ; when she ran joyously down through the clover, with her gypsy-hat half flying from her beautiful hair ; when she stood, with parted lips, at her window, gazing at the new moon, while the one robin sang in the orchard that her lover was fortunate enough to see her, himself unseen. The description of all this belongs to a poet. We, alas ! have got to deal with the practical incidents of daily living ; and there were very unpoetical elements in the story of the young maiden's life. It was not long before they were secretly engaged. Rose yielded to Ned Black's persuasions to keep the engagement a secret more willingly, from her knowledge of her father's ways and habits. With the beautiful and enthusiastic thoughts that filled her, at the knowledge of the

new interest that had come into her life, there was mingled in Rose's heart ominous thoughts in regard to her father. The secret that she felt she had kept from Bobbie must now be zealously guarded from another.

One evening, during the absence of her father, Ned Black had been sitting with her. It was a beautiful May night ; warmer than usual, for the time of the year. Bobbie had been listening to Black's account of some splendid base-ball times that he had lately enjoyed, with eager ears. He was very proud of their, his, and his sister's intimate acquaintance with the captain of the nine. His sister, in the fascinating moments with her lover, did not notice that her brother was unusually restless. Finally, he stole away, and left them to themselves. The two lovers talked in the sweet light for a while, and then sat holding each other's hands in a sweet communion of spirits. They were presently interrupted by a noise at the gate. Rose's heart throbbed, for she recognized the voice of her father. He was returning unusually early. She went to the edge of the veranda, and looked down the garden. Mr. Snelv and Mr. Bandy had dismounted from the latter's dog-cart, and were unsteadily balancing each other on the garden-walk, and exchanging high-bred acts of courtesy. There was a question of precedence at the

gate. Both were evidently much the worse for liquor ; but the knowledge of the courtesy which a descendant of Sir Henry Bandy ought to pay to a descendant of Sir Richard Snel at the garden-gate was not lost sight of. Rose held her hands upon her throbbing bosom. She was conscious that Ned Black stood beside her. Why did he not go ? She saw the two men at the gate reel about, and bow deeply to each other, striving to repress the hysterical laugh that is imminent on the alternations of comedy and tragedy. Presently she saw Bobbie emerge from a thicket, and take his father's arm. After a few minutes, that seemed hours, Mr. Bandy went back to his equipage ; and Mr. Snel, escorted by Bobbie, came up the garden-walk, and was led into the house. Rose sank upon a settee ; and still Ned Black stood silently beside her. How she bade him good-night she did not know. Her brother came to her, and found her, in a fit of hysterics, sitting alone upon the veranda.

“O Bobbie, Ned saw him ! Ned saw him !” she cried, passionately ; “and you too, dear, I forgot you.”

Bobbie knelt beside his sister, and tried to comfort her. There the two remained, clasped in each other's embrace, while the bright moon, in its swift flight, covered them with the shifting shades of the woodbine which twined upon the

pillars of the house. Ned Black felt that he had not acted a manly part in the event which had happened ; but what could he do ? He might have said something, expressed some sympathy, or given Rose sweet words of encouragement. But it would have been “ deused awkward ; a fellow never knows what is best to do under such circumstances. The two old chaps did behave irresistibly funny, as they bowed with such courtesy, and bobbed against each other.” The young man left Rose, thus revolving the occurrence in his mind. As he passed out of the garden-gate, he met Mr. Bandy, who was endeavouring to get into his dog-cart from behind. Ned Black led him to the proper steps, and placed the reins in his hands. Mr. Bandy took off his hat, with a grand wave of courtesy, and, pointing towards the house, said, —

“ I trust my fr-friend arrived safely ? ”

“ Yes : he is all right.”

“ All right, hey ? Mr. Black, to speak confidentially, Mr. Sne-Snevel is getting into the habit of lingering a little too long at the cu-cu-cup. Sorry.” Thus saying, Mr. Bandy, with a look of high-bred courtesy, gathered up the reins and drove homewards.

There are events which make but little impression at the time ; but, afterwards, they can be recalled with thrilling distinctness, to give rea-

sons for one's actions. The young man would have scouted the thought that evening that the knowledge of the father's failing could ever make any difference in his love for Rose. Meanwhile the affairs of the Snelv family were widely discussed in the village. Mr. Snelv had always had the *entrée* into the best society ; for his family was known to be of the very best. His grand manners were much admired by elderly ladies ; and he was held up to the careless, *nonchalant* young collegians who found their way to Dornfield as a true specimen of a gentleman of the old school. Why Rose kept herself so much apart from society was a mystery. Mr. Snelv was interrogated. But he was as much in the dark as anybody ; he could not understand it, and deprecated his daughter's action very much. Presently the story was prevalent that Rose was going into a decline ; and many sympathetic calls were made. But the healthy cheeks of the young lady, and her excursions with her brother, speedily disproved the report. Then, "they said" that she was getting too proud to associate with country people, and was about to join her aristocratic relations in the city. This story gained general credence ; for Mr. Snelv's manners accorded very well with such an intention. Granting it to be true, there was a tacit assumption of superiority in such exclusiveness, that

shocked even the best circles in Dornfield ; and people began to criticise. " Rose was too much with Ned Black ; she should be matronized more. Her dress, too, was very pronounced, and her hats too dashing. She was, it is true, a lovely girl, but too fond of dress." Mr. Silver couldn't see that there was any thing to the girl. It is true, she was a pretty picture to look at, like a design upon French china, — but a very insipid sort of thing.

" Oh, my dear ! " exclaimed Mrs. Silver, " how can you say so ? Rose is a beauty, so dainty and so aristocratic-looking, yet perfectly sweet and lovely. You never saw so pretty a girl in Europe, Mr. Grandhurst."

" I will say," replied that young gentleman, who had come in for a morning's chat, " that American girls are very pretty. A fellow can distinguish them anywhere in Europe. But they fade, you know."

" Perfect wrecks at forty," exclaimed Mr. Silver, waving his hand. Mrs. Silver was born in England.

The lower class in a country village often know secrets which are veiled from that higher class which they most concern. Mr. Snelv's failing was well known in various quarters, and was becoming better known from day to day. Rose had a steadfast friend in John Graham, the

president of the Dornfield bank. Graham was yet a comparatively young man, who, by the exercise of good abilities and sterling qualities, had risen to an honorable position in his native town. He had become acquainted with Rose in administering a small legacy, which an aunt of Rose had left to the young girl. The grave and reserved man of business beheld in the maiden a vision of delight, which disturbed him ever afterwards. He had never thought that he should fall in love, especially with a daisy, or a rose-bud. But he had done so ; and reason and arguments could not bring his mind into its old philosophic channels. The presence and the confidence of the young girl revealed to him a side of himself which he had not suspected. Money-getting and power and influence faded into the background, and the sweet ways of a maiden tortured a strong man. He well remembered the first day she came into his office, with her little brother. She was in a light blue dress, with a bunch of pink roses on her bosom. She wore a gypsy-hat far down upon her profusion of light-brown hair, which was puffed carelessly over her fair brow, and fell in large, loose braids under the hat. She had large, blue eyes, with dark eyelashes, and the most delicate pink hue upon her cheeks. One of her eyes was a trifle larger than the other ; and this

defect was a beauty, for it gave a languishing look, which was absolutely fascinating. Graham looked, and addressed her almost in a savage tone ; for he felt his heart leap up preparatory to taking an unceremonious departure. When she left him, with a sweet smile, which parted a rosy mouth showing a row of pearly teeth, the man dropped his pen, and leaned his head upon his hand. The summer wind came in through an open window, fresh from a clover-field, and he could hear the joyous song of the golden robins, and, farther off, the chorus of bobolinks. The bees murmured in the tall hollyhocks outside the window of his office, and made the half-opened rose-buds nod upon the trellis. Then it was done,—Graham fell in love. But could this happiness be for him. It was nonsense to think about it. He was fifteen years older than she was, and older in thoughts and ways than in years. He finally compelled himself to think it all out, calmly and dispassionately ; and he observed the situation carefully. Mr. Snelvel was a man who provoked him beyond endurance. The words of honor and of courtesy were continually upon his lips ; yet he did not scruple to appropriate the interest of Rose's legacy to further his own comforts and pleasures. This, Graham was fully cognizant of. His secret habit was also early known to the business man ; and he scru-

tinized Mr. Snel's notes with the utmost care. Graham had sprung from the ranks, and felt a certain satisfaction in the knowledge that he had been' indebted to no extraneous influence for his rise in the world. He sarcastically observed Mr. Snel's aristocratic ways and bearing. Long before others, he had noted Ned Black's attentions to Rose, and perceived with a pang her liking for the handsome young man. Once he had met them strolling through the woods ; and he had said to himself, with a deep sigh, "A handsome young fellow, and a beautiful young girl. Alas ! I have passed insensibly beyond into the middle age. If by any means I should win this young girl, I should be cheating her out of her romance of life, which she is now living out with that young man. I should never forgive myself. It is better that I should dismiss the thought of having any romance in my life. There was a time when it could have come in appropriately. But that time is past : it is absurd not to recognize this. Let me try to help this sweet young creature to realize what I cannot." He was a man of invincible will, and he forced himself with an iron hand to go in the path^s his judgment approved. He sought out Ned Black, made many inquiries, observed much ; and, at length convinced beyond doubt of Rose's love for the young man, helped him to obtain a lucra-

tive situation in the bank of which he had the direction. Black never liked Graham. There was a critical side which the latter always showed towards him, which was especially repugnant. He could not understand how Rose could speak in such terms of admiration of his superior. He saw no good fellowship in him: he was not like the genial agent of the Duck Mills in Milltown, or the dashing young head of the Print-works,—men who could buy and keep Graham. Human nature is weak. Graham strove hard to be generous and charitable; but he saw much in his clerk which displeased him; nevertheless, he noticed a new look of happiness in Rose's face, and persuaded himself that there was a glow of goodness in his own breast. Many evenings he guided Mr. Snelvē towards his doorstep, and disappeared in the gloom before Rose should unfasten the door; but not unobserved, for the quick eyes of the young girl always recognized him. Graham felt that she grew more unreserved in her intercourse with him. He longed to be her friend, if not her lover, and saw no reason why he shouldn't.

CHAPTER IV.

TROUBLES.

WHEN the *fête* at the Miltons' was over, Ned Black sought Rose Snelv, and escorted her home. They both walked along the country road in dead silence. Rose's heart was too full to speak, and her companion's eyes were bent in a sullen manner upon the moonlit road. He bade her good-night at her door, with a mechanical kiss, and turned to go.

"O Ned!" cried the young girl, "you are not going?"

"I must," he replied, putting his arm about her waist. "I'm tired: the game this afternoon quite used me up; it was so very hot, you know."

"Oh, to be sure,—I should think you would be perfectly exhausted, my dear Ned; you must forgive me for wishing you to stay. Now, go right to bed, there's a dear fellow."

Ned kissed her sweet face and departed, while she stood—as many a woman has done since

the beginning of the world — watching his retreating form, with unsatisfied longing in her heart.

Her brother Bob, who had wandered home alone, found her still standing, gazing after her lover.

“I’m real mad, Rose,” said Bob, in a husky tone, “with Ned Black.”

“Why, dearie ?” asked his sister, in astonishment.

“Why, seems to me, when a feller takes a girl to a party, he ought not to leave her to wander round alone, as he did you.”

“Why, Bob !” exclaimed his sister, fighting her own convictions, “he is captain of the nine, and much attention was given him, and required of him.”

“Wall, I know he’s captain of the nine, and had to shake hands with everybody. I s’pose I’m hard on him, but I’m jealous for you, Rose,” — and thus saying, the little fellow put his arm about his sister’s waist.

Rose patted his curly head, and pretended to fix a stray branch of the woodbine that climbed the trellis near the door.

“Ned Black is an awful good player, aint he ?” said Bobbie, with an intense air of enthusiasm. “Do you s’pose, Rose, I could ever play as he does ? I’m proud to see you with him, for all

the fellers look at him and you, and say, 'That's Black, the captain of the Dornfield nine.' I'm proud that we know him so well, aint you, Rose?"

"Yes, Bobbie, I am. We like him, don't we?"

"Ye-es," said her brother, in a tone which showed that resentment still mingled with admiration, as he followed his sister into the house.

Ned Black was captain of the Dornfield nine ; but Pat O'Callahan was its despot. Pat was a young Irishman, who had wonderful knack in pitching a ball. Some said, that, after traversing the distance between the pitcher and the batter, it began to describe a spiral around the would-be hitter's bat ; and, even if it were hit, it became a foul ball, which Ned Black, who made a specialty of foul balls, was sure to secure. Pat, too, in other parts of the game was thoroughly at home. We have said that he was the despot of the nine. He understood his own value thoroughly ; and the members of the nine, together with their patron, Mr. Tom Milton, had to pay a high price for his services. Pat was the most impecunious fellow in Dornfield. No one ever had so many poor brothers and cousins who were down sick all at the same time, and who required just ten dollars to make them comfortable. If the ten dollars were not forthcoming, Pat's heart was so tender that he could not practise with the nine.

He also was a man of great pride, and extremely sensitive. The O'Callahans were of noble blood, and could trace their lineage back to the time of St. Patrick. The slightest want of consideration on the part of any member of the nine often led to his dropping his bat, and striding off the ball-field, to which he would not return until the members almost went down on their knees to him. The nine paid for his lodgings and for his clothes. The tailor's bill was no small matter, for Pat loved to array himself in the finest broadcloth. Indeed, there was some excuse for Pat just at this juncture, for he was paying attentions to the housemaid of Squire Thomas, at Milltown.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr. Tom Milton, with a deep sigh, one day after Ned Black had detailed another exaction of Pat, "we must stand this until the end of the next game, and then, by Jove, won't we give him his walking-card?"

"We can't get along without him now, that's certain," said Black, taking his foot off the hub of Mr. Milton's carriage, as the latter prepared to drive away from the door of the bank, where he had been to consult Mr. Graham.

No: the Dornfield nine certainly could not get along without Pat O'Callahan. Pat had one great virtue,—he was loyal. The Milltown nine were anxious to get him away from the Dornfield

nine, and offered him a great bribe ; but the sturdy Irishman swore that he would be true to his friends. Constancy is a great virtue ; but the objects of it sometimes have to pay dearly. Four times had Pat been in the Milltown lock-up for drunkenness ; once, just on the eve of a match-game. Each time Mr. Tom Milton had driven over to Milltown in the utmost haste, to interview the justice of the peace, and procure Pat's release on the payment of a fine. The country justice—Mr. Tooms—was a friend of Mr. Milton's, but, withal, a very conscientious man ; and Mr. Tom Milton generally had a siege of it between Pat and the justice. Mr. Tooms always expounded the law at great length to Mr. Tom Milton, while the old gentleman fumed and fretted.

“ Bless you, my dear fellow, I know that's the law ! ” exclaimed Mr. Tom Milton, sitting in the justice's private room, while the court assembled without. “ But this young Irishman is weak, that's all ; and you are not going to send him to the house of correction, and shut him up for a couple of months, when, with his stalwart frame and strong muscles, he can contribute to the wealth of the country.”

“ Ah ha ! ” said the old justice, taking off his glasses and tapping Tom Milton on the arm with a knowing look. “ Does playing ball contribute to the wealth of the country, hey ? ”

"Oh, Pat's at work, you know,—at work, you know, besides ; and, perhaps, if we both had time, I might argue a point on the value of base-ball playing ; but we won't now,—we won't now."

"No : we haven't time for that," laughed the old justice of the peace, leaving Tom Milton, and going into the court-room.

"Well, Pat !" exclaimed Mr. Milton, after he had paid the latter's fine for the fourth time, "we must have no more of this. They'll send you to the house of correction yet."

"It will niver happen again," snivelled Pat, as he rode home beside the burly form of Mr. Milton. "I went into Jim Murphy's, jist to see the folks ; and Jim says to me, 'Won't you have a glass of ale, Pat ?' and says I, 'A glass of ale won't hurt anybody ;' and thin, as I was coming home, I met two fellows of the Milltown nine, and they asked me to have a little something, for good feeling, you know ; and how could I refuse ?"

"Ha !" exclaimed Mr. Milton, "I'm suspicious of those fellows in the Milltown nine. Pat, you look out for them in future : they'd like to get you out of the way, right well. It's a plot, Pat, believe me,—it's a plot to prevent your playing in this next match-game."

"Niver fear," said Pat.

On Mr. Milton's arrival home, he sent for Black, and told him his suspicions in regard to the intentions of the Milltown nine. "They are an unscrupulous lot over at Milltown," said Mr. Milton; "and there are some high bets made on the next game. The treasurer of the Duck Mills seemed to be very confident, and wanted to bet me a hundred dollars. Well, I'm right up and down, you know; and, when a man comes at me in that way, why, I'm right there too. And I said, 'Make it two hundred, Mr. Davis, and I'm with you.' 'Well,' said he, 'we'll say two hundred.' 'Done!' said I. Now they are feeling pretty cocky over there, I tell you; and we've got to look out. They are sharp, and not over-scrupulous, I believe. They would like to get Pat out of the nine; and, if they can get him sent to jail for intoxication, why, they'll win their bets. Don't like to be hard on any one, but I've seen some things over in Milltown which make me suspicious."

"I'll take good care that they don't succeed," said Black, with a manly flush of indignation on his cheeks.

"That's right," replied Mr. Milton, shaking the young man's hand with real regard. "Remember, I'm in for two hundred dollars. I don't care for the money, but my pride is up. They laugh over in Milltown about Tom Milton and

his ball-team, as they call the nine. 'Tom Milton's last hobby,' they say. Now, we want to whip 'em into silence, I say."

"We'll do it, too," said Black, as he bade the old gentleman good-by.

"So he is in for two hundred dollars!" said the young man to himself, as he walked homeward. "I wish I could say the same. I'm deeply involved, and I don't see my way out either. On the first game we played I bet too confidently, and lost; on the next one I did not retrieve my losses, like the fool that I was."

Meanwhile the excitement in both villages in regard to the coming match increased daily. There was a slight lull in business in Milltown, and the energies of the bustling business-men were readily turned into a new field of excitement. We have shown that there were strong party feelings between the two towns. The democracy had an overruling desire to whip the aristocracy. Capital in business, envious of the safely invested money of Mr. Tom Milton, the retired merchant, was desirous of having a tilt to show its superior mobility. And the youngsters of the two villages had grown up with many unsettled feuds, which could only be allayed by a complete victory at the bat. For a time, greater interests were forgotten, and the entire community played ball. There was a rush for

the daily paper, and the base-ball news was read from the post office-steps by the young men, and eagerly listened to by the old. The amount of money which was bet upon the coming match in Milltown assumed prodigious proportions, in common report ; and it was maintained that the agent of the Duck Mills paid all the bills of at least three players on the Milltown nine. Base-ball playing, for the nonce, was more profitable than working in the mills or farming the rocky hill-sides. The village streets were blockaded every evening by men and boys, who threw base balls to each other, or "batted up," as the expression was, much to the annoyance of old farmers, who drove their mares, accompanied by foals, into town to sell eggs ; and to the terror of matrons, who looked upon a base ball as an engine of death. Indeed, the mothers deprecated the present state of things, and cut out of the daily papers all the dreadful base-ball accidents, for the eyes of their sons. Milltown was determined to have its measure of fun out of the mania ; and, in the midst of the stern and determined preparations for the coming match, like laughs and jests one hears in an embattled fort awaiting the signal for a sortie, there were outbreaks of peculiarly American humor in Milltown. The town genius drew a sketch of the complete annihilation of the Dornfield nine, and it was printed

on one sheet of the Milltown "News," and had a great circulation. Then there were picked-up nines, formed among the thin men and the fat men. The doctor put up an advertisement, that special attention was paid to base-ball accidents ; and the town photographer exhibited two cartoons, which were termed "Before and After." Every young man, as he went along the street, took a ball from his pocket, and amused himself throwing it from behind his back over his head, and catching it in apparently impossible ways ; and *nobby* fingers became a glory to their possessors. The young ladies fell in with the enthusiasm. They wore the colors, worked the colors, sang for the colors, and charades were acted for the benefit of the nine. They listened with the most charming patience to long accounts of base-ball matters, and prided themselves upon their knowledge of the fine points of the game. Every bit of information was treasured up. The wives, sad to relate, did not partake of the general furor : wives are generally deadly enemies to the junketings of their husbands ; and base ball did lead to such irregularities. It seemed as if there was no end to the playing. It was no use, in their minds, to whip a nine, for a dozen, wishing the same lot, seemed to spring up from every defeat ; and with a rapid exaltation of mind, sometimes noticed in

the logical processes of a wife's thought, they predicted that the whole world would take to base-ball playing, to the exclusion of every useful pursuit. The work of the neighboring farmers was much interfered with by the coming match.

The spirit of rivalry which had always existed between the two villages, was fanned into flames by the knowledge that Tom Milton, the magnate of Dornfield, had made it his boast, that, when it came to any thing but cheating, Dornfield was far ahead of its bustling contemporary. The ministers in both towns found it necessary to preach sermons on brotherly love, and the sin of excitement in all things ; but each town wanted to whip just once, and then would, perhaps, think of what their pastors inculcated. The excitement in Milltown was fanned by the presence of two young New Yorkers, who were on a visit to their relatives, and who bet heavily on the approaching contest. The young ladies in both villages worked badges for their favorites, and even formed base-ball nines among themselves. They made bean-bags, and amused themselves in the cool, rainy days, pitching them about, to practise themselves in catching balls. Base-ball bats, crossed with a gilt ball at the juncture, were favorite breastpins. The photographs of the players on both nines were placed

in a conspicuous position in a photographer's saloon, on the main street in Milltown, and were visited by crowds. Young farmers, after a day's hard work, harnessed up old Jerry or the bay mare, and drove into Milltown in the dusk, to gather up the news in regard to the approaching contest.

CHAPTER V.

THE KNAVE OF CLUBS.

MISS MILTON, on the afternoon of the day following the *fête*, was busily occupied in gardening, when Bobbie Snelv, with cheeks aglow with exercise, joined her.

“Well, Bobbie,” said she, with a smile, “where have you been to-day?”

“It’s a secret: but I guess I’ll tell you,” said the boy, sitting down beside her.

“Oh, if it’s a secret, you mustn’t!” exclaimed Miss Milton.

“Oh, I’m going to, though. I’ve been over to Milltown watching the practice of their nine. Ned Black sent me over, for he said they wouldn’t suspect a small boy, and he says I’m a first-rate judge of good play.”

“Oh, my! what a compliment,” said Miss Milton. “So you’ve been watching the practice of the Milltown nine.”

“Yes: and I’m going over every day. We are determined to beat next time. Mr. Milton and Ned Black back me up.”

“Back you up!” exclaimed the young lady in astonishment.

“Yes: they want me to find out all about the players over there.”

“My uncle and Ned Black are sly dogs. Well, Bobbie, why don’t you take me along with you, some time? we could ride over in the pony-wagon.”

“That would be jolly; first-rate. But they would suspect—us.”

“They don’t know that I know any thing about the game,” said Miss Milton.

“But you do, though,” said her companion. “It would be risky.”

“Well, perhaps it would,” said the young lady, meditatively, leaning upon her rake, and looking down at her flower-bed.

“I should admire to have you go!” exclaimed Bobbie. “You are so handsome; and wouldn’t we cut a dash!”

“So you like to be with me because I attract attention, do you, Bobbie?”

“No: it aint that, nuther; I like—I like to have you with me,—cause I love you.”

Miss Milton suddenly sat down on the grass, and kissed the boy.

Her companion blushed violently, and picked the grass in handfuls, as they both sat together in the shade.

“ I wanted to ask you if you’d wait for me,— wait till I’d growed up, and then I’d marry you.”

“ Oh, I shall faint!” exclaimed Miss Milton, with a merry laugh. “ Marry me!”

“ Yes,” said Bob, stoutly, “ when I get to be a man.”

“ Bobbie, you are funny!” exclaimed the young lady, taking both of his hands in her own. “ Why, I’m twelve years older than you ; I shall be a little old woman when you are a young man.”

“ Don’t make any difference to me,” said Bobbie, seizing Miss Milton’s hands.

“ No : I tell you, we shall be very, very good friends always, Bobbie, and you shall come this afternoon and show me where the maidenhair fern grows.”

“ We’ll see, we’ll see,” said Bob, with almost a tear.

“ We’ll see,” replied the young lady, with a joyous laugh, “ who will get to the garden-gate first ;” and set off with a merry step, followed by her sturdy little adherent.

“ I declare, if there aint that Mr. Grandhurst, who sniffs at every thing, and goes round pointing his cane at the homeliest old houses in town !” exclaimed Bob. “ It will be too bad if he’s coming to see you.”

"Sh, Bobbie! he is a very fine young man, just returned from Europe."

"Don't know a thing about base ball ; calls it rounders, and says it aint half as scientific as cricket. Oh, he 's a muff."

"Come, Bob, mustn't talk so. Ah, Mr. Grandhurst, very glad to see you. We are just off for some ferns ; won't you accompany us ?"

"By !" exclaimed Bob Snel, in a loud whisper.

"Should be very happy," said Mr. Grandhurst, glancing askance at Bob Snel.

"That will be jolly ; and Bob is going to show us where to find them." Bob manfully struggled with a desire to forsake the party, but, remembering that Miss Milton did not know where to find the plants they were in search of, led the way.

"That group of elms yonder is very fine, Mr. Grandhurst," said Miss Milton.

"Ye-es," replied her companion ; "fine mass of green ; not quite in keeping with its surrounding ; that old, ragged fence ought to be swept away, and the stones of yonder pasture gathered up."

"Now, I like this primitive landscape ; and that ragged fence is very picturesque in my eyes," replied his companion, looking through her half-closed hand at the elms.

"The values of an American landscape are hard to combine, so as to produce an artistic picture," said Grandhurst, gazing with head half turned, and outlining the objects in the air with his slender cane.

They had not proceeded far on their way before they were joined by Black. Miss Milton welcomed him with great pleasure, for he was the *beau ideal* of the young ladies in Dornfield. She was especially fascinated by his address. His figure was large, and perfectly proportioned. One never caught him in an ungraceful attitude. As the party disappeared down the wood-path, he bent his fine, manly profile down to listen with an air of tenderness and courtesy to her. The only amusement he seemed to have was base ball; and he was an adept in this manly sport. No one could catch as he could. The balls resigned themselves to their fate, and "curbed their bright career" wherever he was. Even the bat seemed instinct with life in his hands. He hit no safe flies to the fielders. The ball rebounded from his bat, through the legs of the most active short-stop, took quick and unexpected turns, like a gray rabbit, past the bases, and ricochetted over the heads of the panting fielders. His name was on the lips of all the town boys, and was mentioned wherever muscular prowess was held in estimation. Every one

liked him, too. The possessor of great physical powers, if he chooses to be "a hail-fellow well met," can be a small sovereign, and have troops of followers.

Perhaps the only enemy that Black had in Dornfield was Dick Softy. The two young men had played together at school, and had been always thrown together. Fate seemed to decree that they should be rivals in every thing, save muscular prowess ; for in this respect Ned Black had a towering advantage. They had striven for the love of the same pretty little Polly Adams, when boys of ten. They had struggled to see who would find the most birds'-nests, the first may-flower, and the most prolific chestnut-trees. Later, they contested for the same prize in the High School, and, after graduation, had both desired the same position in the country bank. In every thing Dick had to acknowledge himself beaten by his brilliant schoolmate. Every one said that the small patrimony which Dick Softy had inherited had made him the indolent, care-for-nothing exquisite that he was ; while Ned Black's poverty had stimulated him to constant successes. The young men had always been friends outwardly ; but the dark hemlock-grove on the edge of Dornfield could tell a story of a fight which took place within its shades. Black had grossly insulted Dick at a picnic ; and

the latter, meeting his foe as he returned from a late call at the Miltons', boldly stepped up to him and slapped his face. The two young men immediately threw off their coats and began to spar. It required but a moment for Ned to whip his adversary ; and Dick had to keep his room for a week, with a black eye and a swollen nose. From that day, Dick began to exercise his flabby muscles. We have detailed his system of gymnastics. A mighty purpose had grown up within him to whip Black. He was also spurred on by the taunts of Miss Milton. In Dick's love for that dashing young lady he seemed to have escaped the rivalry of Ned Black ; but, grown slightly morbid from long encounters with his adversary, he expected every day to see Black step in and bear off that young lady triumphantly. It is true that Black seemed to be quite attentive to pretty Rose Snelver ; but Dick thought that he knew Black's heart thoroughly, and expected to see him make a bold push for the money and position of the heiress. His suspicions seemed to amount to a certainty on the night of the *frête*. The philosophy with which Dick had hitherto regarded the base-ball struggles of the two villages gave way, and he betook himself, also, to practising with the bat. He hired Pat O'Callahan to practise with him in an unoccupied field, remote from observation.

Pat was sworn to secrecy. It is needless to say that the loyal young Irishman kept the secret religiously. In return for this loyalty, Dick's fate and the base-ball man's were inseparably joined. Having gained another staunch friend, Pat felt at liberty to contract more debts, to dress more elegantly, and to be more idle than ever. He inculcated upon Dick the necessity of the regularity of his practice in ball playing, and, apparently in order to keep his pupil's mind upon this necessity, made the young man always keep an eye upon him when he went over to Milltown, so that he might have some one to bring him home in season for the next day's practice, in case Tim Murphy's hospitality should prove too overpowering. Dick, however, thoroughly recognized the excellence of his teacher, and daily gained a little in the knack of catching hot balls and in batting.

"When you see the ball coming, put the palms of yer two hands together," said Pat, "and be ready to resave it. Draw 'em away jist a bit, when the ball touches 'em. That's the talk. Now take the bat, and let me see you knock up a ball or two. Stand firm on your pins, throw the ball well up with the right hand, and thin seizing the bat, which ye have held manewhile in your left, with the two hands hit me a good one."

Dick did as he was told. Five times did the ball drop to the ground, as the young man swung round in a complete circle, with his coat-tails rapidly following his outstretched bat.

“Take it cool and aisy!” cried Pat from the distance where he had stationed himself in the expectance of a fly.

Dick essayed again. This time the ball was struck, and went up in a straight line, about ten feet above his head. The next four attempts were failures. Then came comparative success, in the shape of a grounder, which Pat scooped up and flung back to the batter.

“Ye are getting on,” cried Pat, encouragingly. “Let me have the bat, and do ye take to catching again.”

Dick accordingly relinquished the bat, and took his place in the field. His successful capture of a hot ball from Pat’s bat was not entirely pleasure unalloyed; for his little finger got in the way, and made its importance felt in the economy of the hand. The next high fly that came did not awaken any enthusiasm in Dick’s breast, as he saw it descend from the blue sky a mere speck at its great altitude.

“Now!” cried Pat.

“All right!” came faintly from Dick, as he saw his fate come rushing down.

The ball was held for a moment, and then dropped from Dick’s nerveless grasp.

"We'll try a grounder, next," said Pat, who was having the best of the fun in knocking up the balls: accordingly, a grounder came. Dick was sure of the ball, and placed himself in a sitting posture, directly in line. But the ball had no intention of being an easy capture, and suddenly bounded over his head; and the young man, in his eagerness to capture it, turned a complete summersault, and rolled down a bank.

"Capital!" cried two voices; and Miss Milton, with a merry laugh, issued from the bushes in company with Ned Black.

"What! have you taken to base ball, Dick?" exclaimed Miss Milton. "Well, well, the universe is about to resolve itself into base-ball playing, I really believe. And you do practise so splendidly, Dick! Ha, ha! excuse me, but I can't help laughing. I hope you didn't hurt yourself!"

"Not in the least," answered Dick, glaring at Black, and brushing the earth off his trousers.

"It requires a good deal of practice to catch a grounder," said Ned, superciliously, taking up the ball and throwing it back to Pat. In this act his fine figure showed to great advantage; and it did not escape the observation of Miss Milton.

"There's Pat!" exclaimed that young lady. "Oh! you're coaching Dick, I suppose," said she, as the Irishman approached.

"I was on me way home from a bit of practice, and Mr. Softy wanted a fly or two," replied Pat.

"Oh! that's it, is it?" said Miss Milton, casting a comical look at Dick Softy. "By the way, Dick, I especially admire the way in which you hit up balls: seems to me I never saw it better done, you hit every ball so nicely. Ha, ha, ha!"

Ned Black, also, could not contain himself, and smiled grimly.

"Well," drawled Dick, resuming his old manner, "I get plenty of exercise out of it, and I see that I also was fortunate enough in amusing a couple of friends who were concealed in the bushes."

"Oh, you mistake!" exclaimed Miss Milton, with hauteur. "We had just emerged from the path to Love Pond, when we caught sight of you. Come, go right on with your practice: we will promise not to look." And, thus saying, she walked away, accompanied by her escort.

Pat resumed the bat, and hit some splendid flies to Dick; but that young man was more unsuccessful than ever, and told Pat at length that he had had enough for that day.

"So, it is as I expected," said Dick to himself, in the depth of chagrin. "That man has again crossed my path. I'm a fool to endeavor to contest him in his strong points. With what an

air of superiority he threw that ball back to Pat ! Such an easy grace ! Well, well, and she, too, made fun of me. I believe all women are flirts. I 'll retake myself to my cigar, my easy hammock, and the latest novel ; that is, after I 've whipped that puppy, Ned Black, just once. There don 't seem to be much likelihood of that at present," said Dick, as he walked homeward, after parting with Pat.

A young man who is disposed to be fast can find a good many opportunities, even in country towns. Black found in Milltown many attractions which did not exist in the more sedate village of Dornfield. There was an excellent livery-stable in Milltown, and the keeper of it had a fast-trotting mare ; which was supposed to be his own, but which he kept under his own name for Ned Black. The latter was her real owner. There was a good inn there, provided with an upper room, where young men could congregate and indulge in a game of cards for small stakes. There was also a resort, about four miles out of the manufacturing village, entitled Lakeside, where great suppers could be obtained. Many were the visits that Black made to this place, in company with convivial spirits. All these enjoyments required a great expenditure of money. Joined to these pleasures, there were also great opportunities for making money in various man-

ufacturing enterprises ; for the business created and fostered by the great war had not yet received that severe check which had been predicted by many wise heads. Black, in company with some ardent and enterprising young New-Yorkers, had entered privately into a stock enterprise, which promised to speedily make him a rich man. To obtain the requisite funds, he did not scruple to alter the books of the bank ; for there was in his mind an absolute certainty of being able to replace the money before the deficit could be discovered. Every thing went well for a while ; but at length manufacturing began to decline, and Ned found himself getting deeper and deeper.

After leaving Rose, he walked across the fields to Milltown. There was a full moon, and the foliage was in all the luxuriance of early June. The scene should have filled the heart of a young lover with rapturous thoughts ; the stars were ready to twinkle happily, and to foretell happy nights, when two hearts should beat as one, as their possessors wandered where their fancy listed. But the peace and beauty of the scene were entirely lost upon the mind of the preoccupied man who stood just on the mental border between youth and middle age. "Stay, young man," said the gentle moon, "and see how gently my light shows the rippling of the river,

and how beautifully yonder red farm-house light contrasts in its reflection in the dark pools of water with my silver radiance. The time may come when you will love the darkness of a night without a moon ; enjoy this peaceful moonlight while you can." The young man strode on : the beautiful landscape had no charms for him. At length he emerged from the pastures, and struck the high-road, and in a few moments was at the door of the hotel in Milltown. He immediately repaired to the billiard-room.

"Here is our man!" exclaimed Harry Stetlow, pausing in the attitude of striking a ball.

"You look tired, Black," said Frank Henderson, chalking his cue.

"I *am* rather tired," said Ned Black ; throwing himself upon a lounge, and putting his hands behind his back.

"What's the prospect of your nine beating the next game?" asked Stetlow, after he had missed his ball.

"Oh ! we shall beat," said Black, gloomily. "Your nine can't hit O'Callahan's balls. It's out of the question to compete with a nine which has got such a pitcher."

"Well, old fellow, your manner belies your words, then," said Henderson. "However, I hear old Tom Milton is ready to bet five hundred dollars that Dornfield can produce a nine which can beat any which Milltown can raise."

"Augustus Davis, of the Duck Mills, has a large bet with Milton, I hear," said Stetlow, sitting on the edge of the billiard table. "In fact, all the rich old gents in this town are interested in the affair, and betting is all the rage. There's a chance for some one to make some money out of this match. I've got a small wager myself, with Brown of the Gilbert Mill, that the Milltown nine will win. I hope you are going to make something out of all this excitement, Black. You can make six or seven hundred dollars very easily."

"How?" asked Black.

"Oh! there are various ways," said Stetlow, winking at Henderson, and blowing tobacco-smoke rings in the air. "Come, let's have some punch and a game of cards: I'm tired of billiards."

His companions were not averse to his suggestion, and they accordingly repaired to a private room.

"Now, I tell you, Black," said Stetlow, striking the table with his fist, "you are a fool if you don't make a handsome thing out of this match."

"I propose to," replied Black, watching the smoke from his cigar.

"In what way?" asked Henderson.

"Oh! in the way of bets; I've already taken several."

"On the success of your nine, I suppose?" asked Stetlow.

"Certainly."

"You feel sure, then?" said Henderson.

"Perfectly."

"Well, you are a fool if you don't make a pile. You have the game all in your own hands, haven't you?"

"I think I have."

"Well, then, get some one to take Tom Milton's heavy bets, and so manage the play that the Dornfield nine are beaten," said Stetlow, keeping his sharp black eyes fixed upon Ned Black.

"Who do you take me for?" asked Black, angrily, putting down his glass of punch.

"I take you for Ned Black,—a man who can't afford to neglect opportunities. We must have some more money, Black, to prop up our stock enterprise. Perhaps you see a way to obtain it: I don't. We must have it."

"This idea of yours is quixotic, and damned disagreeable, Stetlow."

"I think Stetlow is right," said Henderson, finishing a glass of liquor. "We ought to make something out of this great excitement. Why, the fellows down in York don't think any thing of making a cool two or three thousand on a ball game."

"Yes; but no honorable players sell a game."

"Well, there are nice distinctions, I 'll acknowledge ; but the crowd have the fun all the same, and then there is the usual luck of the game. I don't see why your hard work and energy in ball-playing shouldn't receive the pay that any other pursuit would have given it, if you had invested the same amount of energy in it."

"We've got to have more money, and that speedily," said Stetlow. "Here is a ready way of getting it: six or seven hundred dollars will save us as many thousands. Without it, every thing goes by the board. Now, if you will manage to let the Milltown nine win, why, I will take old Milton's bets as high as he chooses to go ; and we shall be lifted right out of our difficulties. Then, there are several other bets I can take among Milton's friends : we can make a good thing out of it."

Black moodily drank and smoked. He felt himself under the power of Stetlow. The latter knew all his embarrassments, and had several secrets of his in his possession. Black had dreaded a demand for money from him for many weeks. It had not come ; but he felt inwardly sure that its coming was only a matter of time. He had looked for aid from their various speculations ; but they always needed propping up with additional funds. The sentiment of honor is not sapped all at once: it yields to slow but

persistent attacks. By taking a small sum from the bank, he had dealt it a powerful blow ; but he had consoled himself by the thought that he should speedily replace it. Now he was asked to surrender his personal honor in the cause in which muscular prowess and endurance made an open fight for fair play. Villains preserve, sometimes tenaciously, honor in prize-fights. The term, "a square man," has much significance and weight with them. To sell a game of base ball cost Ned Black far deeper and more agonizing pangs than to take a small sum of money from the bank, with the idea of speedily replacing it ; besides, if he lost the game, how would the Miltons regard him ? He was now in the height of favor with them ; and Miss Milton had come to regard him in quite a tender light, he felt certain. How could he sell the game, and yet maintain the secret ? His companions continued to dwell upon the great excitement with which the game was expected. Special trains were to run from the neighboring towns on the day of the match, and even in the city of Worcester betting ran high ; for the manufacturing firms of Smith & Speller, and Franklin, Brown, & Co., had many friends and business connections in the metropolis. Tom Milton was also well known ; and his former business agents took a personal interest in the approaching contest. Business had grown

dull ; and the minds which had been stimulated by the rush of trade during the war were ready to seize upon any thing which promised excitement.

“ What do you say, old fellow ? ” said Henderson, tapping Black upon the arm with his light cane.

Black roused himself from a deep reverie, and walked the room backward and forward.

“ It is not in the power of one man to make or mar a game of base ball : the chances are widely distributed.”

“ It is in your power,” said Stetlow, “ to lose that game for the Dornfield nine. You are the catcher.”

“ My efforts to lose the game would be too evident ; supposing, for the sake of argument, that I undertook to lose the game.”

“ It is easy enough for you to win over the pitcher, O’Callahan ; so that the game lies between you two,” said Henderson.

Black glared at the two men. From their manner it was plain that they felt sure of their victim.

“ If you know of any speedier way of raising a requisite sum of money, Black,” said Stetlow, “ I should like to hear of it. The note which comes due on the twentieth must be paid. Henderson, I ’ve got to go over and see Green in West Milltown ; don’t you want to ride down

with me? I'd like to know, Black, your decision in this matter by to-morrow morning."

Black returned their salutes mechanically, as they left the room. "A precious pair!" he murmured to himself. He sat down beside the empty glasses at the table, and tried to think over his perilous position. The money which he had taken from the bank must be restored at all hazards; Stetlow must be given money to seal his mouth about certain matters; and money must be raised to save that which had been already invested in stocks and the manufacturing enterprise which he had entered into with Stetlow and Henderson. Money! money! money! seemed to be written in letters of fire upon every wall of the room. He thought over the project of selling the game. It seemed to gain in feasibility the longer he thought about it. Why should he not do it? Tom Milton was a very rich man, and he had the excitement of the game whether it was won or lost. How could he prevent his effort to lose the game from becoming too evident? Pat O'Callahan, it was evident, must be gained over to his side, or disposed of in some way. He was interrupted in his meditations by the entrance of the stable-keeper who kept his mare.

"Well, Brown, how is the mare; had any exercise to-day?"

"She's not well to-night."

"Not well!" Black started up, for he had determined to sell her on the following day to Spring, of Worcester, who had long desired to own her. With the money from the sale, he could restore a portion of the money to the bank.

"She's been sort of moping all day," replied Brown, "and looks out of condition. Her hair stands up in ridges. I want you to come over and take a look at her."

Black speedily left the room with his companion, and repaired to the stable. The hostler held up the lantern in the box stall. The mare was reclining on the floor, and breathing heavily.

"I'm afeard she's going to make a die of it," said Brown.

The tears came into the young man's eyes, as he saw the splendid creature look up at him with her eloquent eyes. He stroked her mane; she gave a slight neigh, and then fell back dead.

"That's ended," said Black, stepping out of the box. He gave orders in regard to her final disposition, and walked out upon the village street. The Fates seemed to decree that he should join with Stetlow in an agreement to make money out of the approaching game. He repaired again to the hotel, and wrote a note to Stetlow, assenting to his proposition, and promised to meet him on the following morning to enter into more definite arrangements.

CHAPTER VI.

BASE-BALL MATTERS.

ALTHOUGH Tom Milton was much liked by his old business friends for his warmth of heart and his hearty ways ; still, he always provoked intense opposition in business circles, from a certain autocratic manner. It was useless to oppose one of Tom Milton's speculative moves : he swept every thing before him by his quickness of conception and concentration of aim. He was an emperor in trade. He carried the same traits into his retirement at Dornfield, and ruled wherever he went. When he took up the Dornfield base-ball nine, from a quick sympathy for young men's pursuits and pleasures, his old business friends and rivals at Milltown entered into opposition at first with a certain sense of humor, and afterwards in deadly earnest. They were determined to thwart him, if there was money and enterprise enough in Milltown. The young business men took up the affair with great eagerness ; out of business

hours, they had generally occupied themselves in trotting their horses against each other, or in getting up races at a neighboring park. The races that spring had been failures, and the same class of men engaged in the base-ball war with all their might. The coming depression in manufacturing, as we have said, contributed also to create an interest in any thing which promised excitement. This state of affairs afforded a good study to Grandhurst, who occasionally drove over to Milltown with the Silvers.

"This is always the way with the American people," said Mr. Silver, one day after they had witnessed a base-ball match on the green. "They run every thing into the ground, just as they take a locomotive and drive it until the thing bursts under the tension that has gradually relaxed its strength."

"Curious state of semi-civilization," said Grandhurst. "Good thing to study, if there was any depth to the thing; but that's the trouble. These people take impressions as quickly as a sensitive plate, and the impressions fade out as soon as they are taken."

"We had certain national characteristics during the Revolution," remarked Mr. Silver; "but we are now ready to take up with any thing that suits the hour. Heigh ho! I've about made up my mind to go to Europe to live."

"I don't think I can stand this sort of thing long," sighed Grandhurst, in return. As he said this, he caught sight of Miss Milton driving with great speed towards Dornfield, with Bobbie Snel on the seat beside her. His heart certainly thumped: it was not possible that this hoydenish girl could have fascinated him in the least. She was only a curious psychological study.

"There goes that girl of Milton's," said Mr. Silver. "She has been over to Milltown with that little urchin to inquire the price of base-ball bats and dead balls, I'll warrant."

Miss Milton had been on a much more important errand. Bobbie Snel had spent the day in gathering items about the players on the Milltown nine, and in watching their practice; and she had driven over in the evening to bring him home according to her promise. The boy, unobserved, had mingled with the players, had treasured up their remarks, and had carefully noted the practice of each man. He had accompanied them to the inn, with the admiring crowd of men and urchins, and had gathered up the various opinions he heard expressed. His heart beat high with exultation, when he overheard the base-ball players of Milltown say that nobody could catch like Ned Black. Wasn't Black the intimate friend of his sister and himself?

Didn't they know the great ball-player better than all the world? Didn't he know that Black loved his own beautiful sister, and wasn't this a secret which the whole world would be proud to know some day? He was tempted to laugh out aloud in derision at the playing of the captain of the Milltown nine, in the presence of the Milltown boys; but prudence restrained him. Wouldn't he hurrah, though, on the day of the match? With his little straw hat far on the back of his head, and his body thrust eagerly through the motley crowd which always watched the practice of the Milltown nine, he was the embodiment of base-ball enthusiasm. Once, during the afternoon, Bobbie had found himself in the midst of a group of men, who were carefully canvassing the chances of victory in the coming match. He heard Ned Black's name mentioned repeatedly; and, apparently full of interest in the practice-game which was going on, listened eagerly to what was said.

"I tell you," said one of the men, whom he heard called Stetlow, "we shall make the thing sure. Black is all right; we understand each other perfectly; and the only question is, how to throw the dust. Ned will manage O'Callahan. We must not appear in the matter, except in a dark way: you understand?"

"There's a large margin of risk," said another dark-featured man.

"Oh! but there is no risk," said Stetlow, speaking in a low, determined voice. "I tell you, Black must lose the game. I've made my bets. We understand each other perfectly. Now, it's only a question whether you will join us."

"I want to talk with Black myself, first," said his companion.

"Well, I agree to that. Black is coming over this evening to have the last talk, and you will have an opportunity. I tell you," said Stetlow, in a whisper, as they moved away from Bobbie's neighborhood, "Black has got to lose this game; and he will do it."

Bobbie stood transfixed among the crowd of urchins who surrounded him. He did not like the looks of the men; and there was something in their conversation that excited him greatly. "Black must lose the game!" How could that be? He resolved to tell his sister the conversation, and see if she could unravel the mystery. No; he wouldn't. Rose didn't know any thing about base ball. He would ask Miss Milton, wouldn't he? or would he? As he walked up the Dornfield road, busily thinking, he found himself presently face to face with old Cherry, Miss Milton's horse. He started back in astonishment.

"Well, Bobbie, are you going to run old Cherry down?" exclaimed Miss Molly, with a hearty laugh.

"My!" exclaimed Bobbie. "I got right into him, didn't I? Guess you thought I was a superambulist?"

"A somnambulist, Bobbie!"

"Yes; that's it. Well, I was thinking."

"What about?"

"Them fellers over there can't play with our fellers: they muff right along. Once, the captain caught a high ball, and they applauded as if he had done a big thing. Why, Ned Black wouldn't have thought any thing of it. I've seen him jump three feet, and catch a red-hot one. Their short-stop plays too wide too; and they let fellers steal bases right and left."

"How does their new man, Masters, play?" asked the young lady.

"Well, he aint much: fellers have to tell him when to run. But he has got a powerful long arm, and he swoops in all the balls that come within ten feet of him. I've heard lots of things to day."

"You have, I know. Tell them to me, Bobbie. Ned Black is coming up to see uncle to-morrow morning; and we want to know every thing." Bobbie suddenly became silent. "You are walking in your sleep again, aren't you?" said Miss

Milton, bending down, and looking him comically in the face.

“I aint nuther.”

“Well, there is something the matter, I know. Tell me, Bobbie.”

“I heard lots of fellers say that Ned Black is the best ball-player in the whole country. They talked about him as if they knew him as well as I do.”

“Of course, they don’t!” exclaimed his companion. “He always speaks of you, and says you know as much about the game as he does.”

“Did he say that?” said Bobbie, with a look of gratified pride.

“Yes: we both are great friends of his, Bobbie. I like him too,” said Miss Milton, with a blush. There could be no harm in acknowledging an interest in Black to the boy.

Bobbie immediately related all that he had heard. His companion in her turn became extremely thoughtful. “Oh! he has some business speculations in Milltown. That is what they were talking about. You know, business men talk about their ‘little game,’ and use slang phrases. She quieted the curiosity of the boy by the answer; but his communication awakened a train of thoughts within her.

The material of the Dornfield nine was excellent. The weakest spot in the nine was, to

speak paradoxically, also the strongest. O'Callahan was a superb pitcher, every one agreed; but he could not be depended upon off the ball-field. Once engaged in a game, and he played gallantly; but the difficulty was to keep him in good trim from day to day. He fully understood his importance; and was determined to profit by it to the utmost. He ruled the nine with a rod of iron. "O'Callahan has taken a miff, and there can't be any practice to-day;" or, "O'Callahan is on a spree, and Mr. Milton is searching Milltown for him." The young Irishman knew that he would be taken care of, and he consequently went his own way. After his sprees he was moody, and thought that the rest of the nine considered themselves above him; and he wouldn't play until all had abased themselves before him, like the subjects of an Eastern monarch. Mr. Tom Milton fumed and fretted. He would give Pat a lesson some day. Just let them win this match, and then the Irishman should see who was master; but, nevertheless, Pat was master now. He wore the best black broadcloth, and lived on the fat of the land. He sent for his first cousin in Ireland; and got him a place through the influence of Mr. Milton; and he seriously meditated matrimony with the widow of Mike Carney, who lived in Milltown with her five children. We have related the struggles of

Mr. Milton to keep Pat from the grasp of the law in Milltown. These struggles became greater from day to day. It happened — fortunately for the morality of Dornfield and Milltown, but unfortunately for Mr. Milton — that the temperance cause had begun to be unusually agitated ; and it was resolved to proceed against all illegal dealers in liquor in both villages. Some of the deacons of the church began to denounce base ball, and pointed to Pat O'Callahan as a proof that it encouraged drinking. Tom Milton was accused of countenancing the use of liquors. Mr. Milton held his standing in the community very jealously, and was much troubled by the talk which arose ; but he did not flinch. Pat should pitch for them, at all costs. Finally, it was determined that Pat should have a room in the neighborhood of Black's ; and that young man promised to see that he was in bed at nine o'clock every evening. Pat was given a serious talking to by Mr. Milton, and he was all repentance and tears ; for it was after a fresh release from the lock-up at Milltown, where a severe penalty had stared him in the face.

“ Now, Black, we have done our part,” said Stetlow, as he related the endeavors in Milltown to get Pat sentenced and out of the way. “ You must do yours, — any way it seems best ; but the fact is, Pat must not pitch against our nine.”

Black felt that he was getting deeper and deeper into the toils. So Pat came to have a nice room next to his. He dressed in the best, and wore shoes which were masterpieces of workmanship. They were stitched in the most ornamental fashion; and were fashioned to a point which, like the horns of a species of antelope, threatened to turn back so far as to penetrate the body. He purchased a fiddle, and learned to play *Rory O'More*. Some of the deacons of the church said they heard high noises of wassail in Pat's room late at night: but they were felt to be mistaken; for Ned Black, it was well known, had taken charge of the pitcher.

When it began, Rose could not tell; but Ned Black grew less attentive and loving. He was often silent and preoccupied when they were together. He had met her, on the morning after he had seen her father at the garden-gate, with the same openness of demeanor, and had convinced her of his love for her in the same manner that he had always done. The change she noticed was perhaps due to the coming base-ball game. His mind was occupied with it. It seemed as if the nine practised more than ever. There were few afternoons or evenings that they could be together. Rose sat in her chamber watching incessantly for his coming, gazing out

through the blinds. One evening she saw him walk by with Miss Molly Milton. They were talking merrily together. Rose flung herself upon a couch, and wept bitter tears, and then proudly rose and removed all trace of them. "She was too silly: of course he could walk with Miss Milton, occasionally." Her father grew more exacting from day to day, and came home more helpless night after night. Rose perceived that some one helped him through the gate: she could not recognize Mr. Graham, and thought that it was her lover. The sweet thought that this watchfulness was done for love of her was turned to bitterness by pride and a feeling of dishonor. Mr. Graham saw that she was troubled, and he made her realize by his courteous manner that he was a much-interested friend. But one has to bear the severest pangs of life alone. Her father despised Graham. "Who were the Grahams?" he asked Rose, frequently, in a contemptuous tone. Mr. Graham angered him by his rigidity in business matters. Mr. Snelvel looked upon commercial pursuits as beneath a gentleman; and he regarded, furthermore, the man who disputed or questioned a Snelvel's right to borrow on insufficient security as a base-born churl. A man's habit of looseness in money matters is never questioned by one person alone; and Mr. Snelvel's notes of

hand were looked upon, generally, with distrust by the well-to-do farmers about Dornfield. The management of the Snelvel mansion fell into much disorder; for Mr. Snelvel was so very exacting of his cook, and expected her to take so large a share of her wages in the honor of living with a family of the Snelvels' standing, that he was generally poorly served. Rose had to bear the brunt of her father's displeasure at the poorness of their table. His rebukes were always administered in the most courtly manner, but withal in a very cutting one. So that, after restraining her brother's impulsive defence of his sister, she withdrew to her own room to have a good cry. It is not to be wondered at, perhaps, that a man like Mr. Snelvel, accustomed in his youth and middle age to adulation and attention, should, after spending a tiresome morning among his books, dress himself with the utmost elegance,—even to putting a rose in the lapel of his double-breasted coat,—and seek the society of his congenial friend, Mr. Bandy.

Miss Milton called on Rose, frequently. But they never could be very intimate; although Miss Milton greatly admired her friend, and was ready to be very demonstrative. Rose's reserve, however, was impenetrable. She had been brought up in the notion that it was the sign of low-born people to manifest much feeling; and

her father had cultivated in her a certain exclusiveness. Miss Milton, on the other hand, had grown up in an atmosphere of demonstrative affection. She was speedily chilled by the aristocratic bearing which Rose manifested, almost unconsciously. Miss Milton had conferred upon her the name of the "Rose of Dornfield," and was always loud in her expressions of admiration. Since Black had been a frequent visitor at the Miltons', the two young women saw less of each other. Rose, whenever they met, showed much *hauteur*; which angered Miss Molly at first, and afterward fascinated her.

"Don't you think Miss Rose Snel is absolutely bewitching?" she said to Ned Black, one evening, in an innocent way.

The young man colored; but it could not have been that his companion should have noticed his blush, for they were sitting in the twilight.

"Yes," he replied; "she is very pretty."

"Pretty! why I call her absolutely beautiful. I don't see what the young men are thinking of, not to pick such a rose."

"There are so many beautiful flowers in Dornfield," said Black, with a bow.

"Of course, the place is celebrated; but there is but one rose here. I think she has a face that a poet might dream about. The gaze of those large eyes fairly intoxicates me."

"You talk like a young man," laughed her companion.

"I wouldn't merely talk if I were one," retorted his companion.

"Is it possible," said Black to himself, as he went home, "that Miss Milton thinks I am engaged to Rose? Yes, Rose is beautiful; but what a fool I was not to go in for this rich girl!"

Miss Milton had revolved Bobbie's communication carefully over in her own mind. She was a girl of much penetration, and she watched Ned Black narrowly; resisting with a strong will the fascination which she felt creep over her in his presence. It was not possible that he was acting in an underhanded way in this coming game. He seemed to be the soul of honor; and such a manly fellow! She felt positively irritated at the contrast between him and Dick Softy. She liked the latter; but she despised his effeminity.

"Dick," said she one day to the latter, as he strolled in to see her, "do they ever sell base-ball games? Now don't try to pun: I want a fair answer."

"You fire your questions at me as if they were cannon-balls," said Dick. "Suppose I should ask, What are you continually working on that blue stuff for? Now, no subterfuge."

"Well, this blue stuff is for the badges of our nine. But, honestly now, do they?"

"Do they?"

"Ever sell base-ball games?"

"In Boston, I believe you can get 'em at the shops: let me see,—down there in Cornhill."

"Come, come, you know what I mean: do they ever lose a game for money?"

"Yes," said Dick, looking her honestly in the face, with his blue eyes expressing much curiosity. "They do in the large cities, sometimes; but we are so honest in Dornfield that it is not to be thought of."

"I am glad to hear it. Well, Dick, I was truly glad to see you playing base ball the other day. I suppose you can hit a ball, once in a while, now?"

"No doubt of it,—not the least. Deused bore, however, this base-ball excitement. I'm longing for it to be over, so that people will become rational again."

"Now, don't you talk like Mr. Grandhurst," exclaimed his companion. "I want you to have some enthusiasm; and not think every thing is a bore, and ~~that~~ there is nothing good that is American. That man angers me beyond measure. He hasn't any healthy enjoyment of things. He has lived on French cooking so long that his whole system partakes of its mawkish, unsat-

isfying fastidiousness. He wants to convert the freshest and purest impulses of nature, which he should accept, into subjects for dissection. He psychologizes about every thing. I like a fresh man ; one who can run a race, or play ball, or act out whatever there is in him, without consulting mental processes. A man like my uncle ; simple and natural, strong and noble,—that is the kind of man I would have."

"Would have!" continued Dick, in a jesting tone.

"Never mind," replied Miss Milton, coloring slightly, and bending over her work.

"I think of going away soon," said Dick, in a sad tone, watching her narrowly.

"Going!" she exclaimed, quickly lifting her eyes.

"Yes,—to supper."

"Oh! I would go instantly. Don't let me detain you one instant. I think I hear your supper bell now. Do go. Can't I have John harness up, and take you home?" She arose, and swept across the room to touch the bell.

"I wouldn't pull it," said Dick, lazily.

"I shall pull it."

"No: I wouldn't, really."

"Why not?"

"Simply because John has taken your uncle over to Milltown."

"It seems to me," exclaimed Miss Milton, "that you keep informed in regard to the motions of John, to say the least."

"Oh! I know all that is going on in this house," said Dick, "especially when it is told to me. I met John on the way over."

"Why didn't you say so?"

"Why should I?"

"Of course you should."

"I don't see why."

"Don't anger me."

"Miss Molly," said Dick, rising, and repressing the tones of his voice, "why can't we be good friends?"

"Why, aren't we?" exclaimed the young lady, extending her hand, and looking at him with wonder.

"I seem to provoke you always," said Dick.

"You do not provoke me," said Miss Milton, rising and speaking very calmly, as she stood looking at the young man. But you know, Dick, that I think you are growing effeminate in your ways; and I long to see you true to those manly instincts which I know you have, and which you conceal under your indolent habits. I would have you like Ned Black,—active, energetic, with his whole body trained to be at the beck of a healthy mind."

Dick smiled, and held out his hand, and said,

"We shall understand each other, some day," and left her abruptly.

"What can he mean?" exclaimed Miss Milton, thoughtfully, as she watched him disappear down the lawn. "Dick is a first-rate fellow; I like him better every day; if he only had more *vim*! Bless me! I never could marry such a fellow. Marry? 'What an idea for me to be talking!' as Bridget says."



CHAPTER VII.

A BIT OF RAILLERY.

ONE evening after Miss Milton had entertained in succession Mr. Grandhurst, Dick Softy, and Ned Black, she burst into her uncle's study, and impulsively put her arms about the old gentleman's neck. "I shall never leave you, uncle," said she.

"Why, my girl, what is the matter?"

"I shall never leave you," sobbed his niece.

"I know you will not; who expected you should?" said the old gentleman, kissing her cheek with fond pride.

"I hate men."

"You do, you jade," laughed Mr. Milton; "that's a strange remark."

"Well, I hate that Mr. Grandhurst. He despises every thing that is American, and thinks the country is going to ruin, and affects the European in every thing; finds no congenial atmosphere in this country: every thing is too crude."

"It's a mistake to bring an American boy up in Europe, I've always maintained," said her uncle. "They get into ways which don't suit here: they can't seem to fit into things, that's the whole amount of it. Dilettants, dilettants, — that's what I call 'em; dilly-dallies, dilly-dallies, in plain English. What has Mr. Grand-hu[red] said this evening that has provoked you especially?"

"Oh! he dwelt upon the pleasures of living abroad; and turned up his nose at our base-ball games, and lamented the crudeness of every thing. I was tempted to call him refined sap, and Dick Softy crude sap."

"Has Dick been here this evening?"

"Yes; and doesn't that fellow provoke me? Oh! I shall go crazy with him, some day."

"What is the matter with Dick? he is a good fellow."

"He's a namby-pamby; and the old gentleman seems to take pride in it. I should like to speak to him about it with Dick; I wish I knew of something that could rouse the fellow, — dynamite, nitro-glycerine, or any thing."

"Love," said the old gentleman, slyly pinching his niece's cheek.

"Love?" she echoed in disdain. "That fellow fall in love! Never: it would take too much exertion for him. He said that he hadn't been to

see me before, because he hadn't been able to catch a ride on some cart coming this way."

"Oh ! he was joking," said her uncle.

"No, he was not, uncle : he said it in downright earnestness, and I believe him."

"Well, Dick is an honest fellow ; he 'll come out all right some day : there 's good blood in his veins."

"It runs awful sluggishly," replied Miss Milton. "He don't manifest the least interest in our approaching game. He says, however, that he has hired Bobbie Snel to wake him out of his hammock at the seventh innings ; for he says that two innings in a ball game is all he can stand. Can you imagine such a lazy good-for-nothing ?"

"Why don't you rouse the fellow, Molly ?" said Mr. Milton. "There 's something in the chap. I saw Ned Black coming up the avenue. He has been here — has he not — to-night ?"

"Yes ; and it was refr
[redacted] who was downright en
men with some *go* to [redacted] was
delightful ; he always is, you know. Don't you
think he is a fine young man, uncle ?"

"Oh ! very. I think him a promising young fellow."

"He says that we are sure of winning the next match. We talked over the matter of colors. He says that the Milltown folks have

adopted red. What do you think, uncle, of our taking blue?"

"Blue is a good color,—'true blue,' that's what they always called me on 'change, Molly."

"You *are* true blue," said his niece, kissing him, impetuously. "Now, I think blue will be a splendid color. Mr. Black thinks so too. He's got ~~handsome~~ and some blue eyes,—hasn't he, uncle?"

"I never noticed, girl. Bless you! I don't go round looking into young fellows' eyes."

"Well, I don't either; but couldn't help seeing 'em when they are,—they are"—

"Looking right into yours?"

"No: I'll tell you some time; but, honestly now, you do like blue? Well, I'm so glad. I got such a beautiful blue bonnet, which will be just the thing for the match. Then, Mr. Black says there is going to be such a crowd here. Special trains are going to run up from Worcester to Milltown, and there are to be three lines of stages put on between that place and this. Mr. Black is sure that ~~we~~ shall win. I have no doubt of it, for he is such a splendid player."

"Of course we shall win," replied her uncle. "Tom Milton never failed to win in any thing he ever undertook."

"I'm so sorry about Dick Softy," said Miss Milton, meditatively. "If he had only a little of Ned Black in him! He might have played in this

match, if he had only practised. Mr. Black has great contempt for him, I can see."

"Wake him up, Molly; wake him up. He is a fair subject for any girl to flirt with."

"He won't flirt, uncle ; that is the worst of it : he only cares for himself and his own comforts. I despise him : he will be one of those detestable club-men,—don't I know him ? He says is going to the city in the winter, and intends to join the club."

"Well, if he does, there's the end of him," said her uncle; for he was firmly convinced that club-life had ruined more men than war ever did.

His niece presently left him to arrange for making the blue badges for the base-ball club. Mr. Milton watched his niece, with great pride, as she left the room. "That's one girl in a thousand," said he to himself. "She is impetuous, quick as a flash, sympathetic, and high-strung,—just the sort of girl I should have married when I was a young man. Heigh ho ! It might have been ; but I lead a jolly old life here, after all. Molly is as good as a daughter to me, and I mean to be a good father to her. Bless her ! I 've seen the evil of interfering with a young girl's loves, and I mean to let her select for herself. These young fellows, Grandhurst, Dick Softy, and Ned Black, are all unobjection-

able, as far as I can learn. Black is a gallant chap, and my heart warms to him the most. I hear he's a good fellow, and has first-rate business ability. Well, well! we shall see: time enough for Molly yet."

On the morning after the call of the young men, Miss Milton set out in her basket-wagon, accompanied by Mr. Grandhurst, to search for rhododendrons, which grew in abundance in the neighborhood of Dornfield. She had promised to show him a delightful ride through the woods. As they drove through the village, they met Dick Softy, who was walking somewhat heavily with a cane. He had turned his ankle slightly in his secret gymnastics.

"Did you fall out of your hammock?" asked Miss Milton, with an intense air of sympathy, reining in her horse.

"Ye-es, yes," drawled the young man; "fearful hammock accident in Dornfield."

"Really, now, are you hurt? you look pale; let me carry you home."

"All right," said Dick: "I never refuse a ride." And, thus saying, he took the footman's seat behind. Miss Milton started up her horse vigorously, and they went bowling down the street.

"Miss Milton has evidently forgotten that I live in Dornfield," said Dick. "We are appar-

ently bound now either for the neighboring village of four corners, or Liverpool, London, and Paris."

"Don't be afraid; I'll see that you get home," said the young lady.

"This is jolly," said Dick, reclining at his ease. "I'm glad I met you."

"Ha, ha! seems to have been a fortunate meeting," smiled Grandhurst, who ill relished the impending interruption of his *tête-à-tête* with Miss Milton.

"Wasn't it?" repeated Dick. "Miss Molly, there is a big stone there in the road."

"Where?" asked Miss Milton.

"Right ahead."

"Is that it?" she asked, as she drove over a big boulder.

"Ya-as," replied Dick: "that felt like it."

"Do you like to drive, Mr. Grandhurst?" she asked.

"Not particularly."

"Don't you ever drive?"

"Oh, yes! sometimes."

"Won't you drive now? I feel a little tired."

"Certainly," said Grandhurst, taking the reins. The road at this point was very rough; and the horse, feeling a new hand at the reins, quickened his pace. Grandhurst held a tight rein, with both elbows out. They tore down the rocky

road. The horse was evidently beyond Grandhurst's control.

"I think I will take the reins again," said Miss Milton, grasping them from her companion's hand just in time to avert disaster.

"I wouldn't," said Dick. "You drive so fearfully slow: this pace is glorious."

Miss Milton said nothing; but, firmly compressing her lips, set about controlling the horse. In a few moments they were proceeding at a slow trot down a fine avenue, which led through a wood.

"This horse is accustomed to my way of driving," said she, apologetically.

"He evidently was restive under my reins," said Grandhurst, who wished himself well out of this excursion. The road which Miss Milton took was completely arched over by the light green of the early summer foliage. The road was just wide enough for the basket-wagon. The sunlight mottled the back of the horse, and played over the figures of the occupants of the carriage. The wood-thrush whistled sweetly in the depth of the green-wood. A robin flew across the road, fearful of the fate of its newly fledged offspring, which winged heavily after the mother. A partridge whirred suddenly at their right hand.

"Isn't this glorious?" cried Miss Milton, with intense enthusiasm.

"Fine wood," remarked Grandhurst, in a moderate way; "reminds me of a ride in the Bois du Boulogne."

"It's ever so much finer than any thing in Europe," insisted Miss Milton. "The woods there haven't our splendid forest odor." (Dick sniffed loudly from behind.) "Look at that graceful birch standing against the dark green of the pine. Where in Europe can you see such a graceful combination? See that glorious woodbine winding itself about that young elm, which is striving to overtop the forest of young trees about it. In the fall, it will look like a pillar of flame. What's the English ivy to the American woodbine? See the variety of flowers, even in this sheltered wood.—Oh my!"

With a sudden exclamation, she stopped the horse, flung the reins to Grandhurst, and jumped out of the wagon.

"See a snake?" drawled Dick, brandishing his cane, and preparing to descend.

"Cypripedium!" cried Miss Milton, holding up a pink, balloon-like flower. "Lady's-slippers, see! Here's another! and another! I did not know they were to be found in this wood."

Grandhurst could not help admiring the handsome young girl, as, with hat half off her head, she rushed from spot to spot, picking the showy orchids.

"There they sit!" murmured Miss Milton to herself, glancing at her companions. "Two noodles. Men are too funny for any thing. They haven't a particle of enthusiasm. Mr. Grandhurst is *so* refined, and *so* well dressed! And Dick is *so nonchalant!* I should like to see him disturbed, just for once. I believe I'll try to arouse them. 'Help! help!'" she shrieked, and sprang back, pointing tragically at the ground.

Both young men sprang out of the wagon, and rushed into the wood.

"Don't leave the horse, don't leave the horse!" cried Miss Milton, in an agitated manner.

Grandhurst stopped, and went back to the side of the animal; while Dick bounded to Miss Milton's side, apparently forgetting his lameness.

"Thought you were lame, Dick?" said she, mischievously, as he approached.

"What is the matter?" cried the latter.

"It was a great, big,—enormous green snake."

"Ten feet long, I suppose," drawled Dick, "and big in proportion."

"He went right in there," said Miss Milton, pointing under a log. "Look at Mr. Grandhurst standing there beside old Polly. He evidently thought she was of more consequence than I was."

"Course he did," replied Dick: "we are three miles from home. Oh my! how you made my heart beat! I believe my foot is worse too."

"Too bad!" exclaimed the young lady. "Do take my arm. I'll help you to the carriage."

"I can't make that girl out," said Grandhurst, as he saw her approach with Dick on her arm. "She is refined; and yet she isn't. I shall begin to believe that she is a perfect hoyden."

Miss Milton explained to Grandhurst, with an air of *hauteur*, that it was a snake; and that she had a perfect horror of reptiles. And, taking the reins, they all got into the carriage, and drove on. Presently, the road passed through a pine-wood. The road was carpeted with the brown, odorous, pine spangles; and it seemed as if they were driving over a carpet, so smoothly did the carriage wheels pass over the soft covering of the ground. Here and there, the prevailing brown color of the road was dappled with the bright gold of sunlight.

"This reminds me of a cathedral," said Grandhurst, outlining the picture in the air with his cane.

"It's a great deal finer than any old, musty cathedral," said Miss Milton. "You can find such woods as these only in Dornfield. Oh, how I love them!"

“I love the cats,
I love the rats,
I love the mice,
In my dear home at Rye.
There is no place so nice
As my dear home at Rye,’ ”—

sang Dick.

“These woods are unmistakably fine,” said Grandhurst. “I doubt, however, if an artist could find them available for a picture. This scene suggests an American forest clearing. One almost expects to see a paper collar lying round here, somewhere.”

“I see that you will have to go back to Europe to exist,” remarked Miss Milton, quickening the pace of her horse.

“There are powerful attractions in America too,” said Grandhurst, significantly.

“How can there be?” asked Miss Milton, turning her innocent eyes upon the speaker.

Grandhurst adjusted his eye-glasses, and looked up at the branches overhead. He was nettled. “Give me a woman of tact,” said he to himself. “This girl is a perfect furnace of impulses and unregulated enthusiasms.”

At length the party emerged from the pines into an open lot.

“There are the rhododendrons!” exclaimed Miss Milton, pointing at some rising ground

near a brook. "Come, Dick: we will get Mr. Grandhurst to hold the horse."

Grandhurst wondered whether there was any irony in her remark. He began to feel that he should have left the horse to her fate, on the previous occasion, when Miss Milton saw the snake. However, he sat in the wagon holding the reins, while Miss Milton and Dick proceeded into the open lot. He began to feel decidedly nettled. This imperious young beauty seemed to be continually putting him into unpleasant situations. "It seems rather spooney to sit here watching this old nag," said he to himself; "but what am I to do?" Grandhurst felt thoroughly at home in the formal circles in which he had moved abroad. No one was more observant of etiquette. In company with this American girl, however, he felt utterly at a loss. Meanwhile, Miss Milton and her companion had reached the rhododendrons, and were busily occupied in gathering them. They were laughing merrily, and apparently having a great romp. Grandhurst saw Dick go down to the brook, and fill his drinking-cup, and present it to Miss Milton. They then, apparently, had a slight altercation, and the young lady threatened to throw the contents of the cup into the young man's face. He caught her hand, and the two swung round, each evidently desirous of pouring the water

upon the other. They shrieked with laughter. Finally, Miss Milton gained the cup ; and Dick fled, closely pursued by her. Presently, he turned in an imploring manner, and received the water directly in his face. Then Miss Milton was evidently moved with compassion ; and the two proceeded again to gather flowers.

“Shouldn’t you think, Dick, that Mr. Grandhurst would leave that wagon, and join us ?” said Miss Milton.

“No, I shouldn’t. And have water poured down his neck ?”

“Oh ! I should never dare to do that. I should be awful proper with him.”

“Why aren’t you proper with me, then ?”

“Oh ! we are old friends, Dick,” said she, extending her hand.

Dick took it, and gently kissed it.

Miss Milton blushed quickly. “Come, Dick ; we’ve got enough rhodos. Let’s carry them to the carriage.”

“Aren’t these glorious, Mr. Grandhurst ?” said she. “What do you think of American wild-flowers ?”

“You seem to forget I’m an American,” remarked the latter, smiling grimly.

“Oh ! so you are. You are so Europeanized, I forget. Now, what are we going to do with all these flowers ? We can’t carry them all.”

"We can dispose of one bunch, any way," said Dick, fixing a small bush on the horse's head-gear.

"That's a jolly idea," cried Miss Milton. "Let us trim out the old nag with all we can't carry in the wagon."

Dick and she, accordingly, covered the horse with the pink blossoms, until she was almost hidden. Every loop-hole in the harness had its spray.

"This is great fun, isn't it, Mr. Grandhurst?" said Miss Milton, surveying the horse from a little distance. "Oh! she looks too funny for any thing. Won't we cut a figure, driving through the village? I don't care." Thus saying, she took her seat in the wagon, and they proceeded homeward. At the entrance to the village, they met the Silvers driving out. Grandhurst reddened. He was conscious that he was making himself ridiculous; but this should be the last time. He was engaged for a sketching excursion with the Silvers, on the following day, and proposed to give them an amusing account of his morning's experience. Mrs. Silver smiled sweetly; and Mr. Silver bowed, and waved his hand courteously. Their horse, taken with surprise, looked at the bedecked animal of Miss Milton, and started suddenly to one side, and went off at a smart pace, much to the relief of Grandhurst.

On the following morning, he started with the Silvers on their excursion. They were going to Crystal Lake ; and had, on the recommendation of Miss Milton, hired Bobbie Snel to be their guide, and to assist them with the boat in which they proposed to cross the lake. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Silver, their niece, Miss Gould, of Boston, Grandhurst, and Bobbie. The latter was very unwilling to accompany the party, for there was a practice-game of the Milltown nine that morning with a club from a neighboring town ; but he had been prevailed upon by Miss Milton. Grandhurst found Miss Gould an exceedingly cultivated young lady. She had read much, and was even an accomplished Greek scholar. Mrs. Silver spoke very highly of her talents as an amateur in art. Of her ability in this direction Grandhurst waited for an opportunity to judge. She certainly conversed very well. She was a pale-faced young lady, with a very intellectual face, and gave one the impression that she was quite delicate. On the way to the pond, Grandhurst gave an account of his ride after rhododendrons. His companions were very much amused.

“ It was all just like Molly Milton,” said Mrs. Silver. “ It is a pity her uncle doesn’t take her abroad. She is growing up in this country town in a very wild manner.”

"She is so intensely patriotic, — by Jove!" — said Grandhurst, "that I shall not dare to mention Europe to her in the future."

"Well, she gets that from her uncle," said Mr. Silver, in his slow, measured way. "It's natural enough. He has been a fortunate man, financially; but he is narrow in his intellectual sympathies. Imagine a man of his age taking such an interest in these base-ball matters."

"Miss Milton is a girl of good natural abilities," remarked Miss Gould. "We went to school together."

Bobbie Snel, who was in front with the driver, looked back at Miss Gould, with a pleased look.

"Sh! sh!" said Mrs. Silver, touching her lips, significantly. "Bobbie Snel," she whispered to the group, "is a stanch adherent of Miss Milton. You must not speak so freely."

"That's another queer freak of the girl," said Mr. Silver. "The idea of taking up that little chap!"

When, under the leadership of Bobbie, the party struck into the wood which skirted the pond, Grandhurst accompanied Miss Gould. He found her extremely intelligent. He had been longing for many days for intellectual stimulus, and was soon deeply engaged in a discussion with her on the degree of reality one should use in

sketching from nature. Meanwhile Bobbie went on, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Silver. The latter examined all the plants on the way. As Bobbie Snelv afterwards told Miss Milton, "Mr. and Mrs. Silver were queer folk : they gave the most lockjaw names to jack-in-the-pulpits, wake-robins, and lady's-slippers. Then, they were so awful afraid of wetting their feet ! Their voices were so high they skeert all the partridges off their nests."

"My little man," said Mr. Silver to Bobbie, during a pause while they waited for Grandhurst and Miss Gould to join them, "I hear you are very fond of base ball."

"Some," replied Bobbie, shaking his head enthusiastically.

"Do you play much ?" asked Mrs. Silver, taking off her sundown and fanning herself with it.

"A little. I've got so I can hold a pretty hot ball."

"You can, eh ?" said Mr. Silver. "What do you think of the chances of our winning the next game ?"

"Fust-rate. There's no beating a nine that has got Ned Black for catcher. Then, he is an awful good batter ! Did you see him make that drive through centre-field in our last game ?"

"No," ejaculated Mr. Silver. "'Drive,' hey ?"

"Yes; and Bill Hayes muffed it, and Clapp stole third on it."

"Drive,' 'muffed,' and 'stole third'!" repeated Mr. Silver.

"Grandhurst, do you understand this new language of base ball?" he said to the latter, who at that moment came up.

"I don't pretend to," said Grandhurst, superciliously.

"It's getting beyond me," said Mr. Silver.

"Well, here we are at the lake," said Mrs. Silver. "Pretty, isn't it?"

"Perfectly lovely!" exclaimed Miss Gould. "What a lovely sketch it would make just from this spot!" and, thus saying, she formed a hollow tube with her hand, and gazed at the landscape.

"Why don't you make a sketch of it, Clara?" said Mrs. Silver. "It won't take you long. Mr. Silver and I will get into the boat, and go over to the other side of the lake, and select a spot for our lunch. Bobbie can row the boat back for you."

"I don't want to detain any one," said Miss Gould, unpacking her sketching materials, and setting up an umbrella.

"I should only be too happy to remain with you," said Grandhurst.

Miss Gould protested; but finally assented to his remaining.

"You could walk round the borders of the lake, and through that beautiful forest-walk, and join us at the sand-beach," said Mrs. Silver.

"'Fraid they'd get lost," said Bobbie, who sat in the boat, with the oars in position.

"'Lost'!" repeated Grandhurst, with scorn. "Yes, Mrs. Silver, we will join you at the sand-beach. I will escort Miss Gould through the woods, if she will permit me."

"I shall be delighted," replied Miss Gould, who was already deeply absorbed in a charcoal sketch.

"Be they going?" asked Bobbie, as Mr. and Mrs. Silver got into the boat.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Silver: "they will come to us by and by, through the woods."

Bobbie shook his head gravely, as if he saw danger ahead; but he was anxious to show his muscular power in rowing, and exerted himself to send the old boat surging over the quiet bosom of the lake.

While the Silvers were rapidly receding, Grandhurst stretched himself on the grass, beside Miss Gould.

"There are some fine values in the view you have taken," he remarked.

"Yes, and the ripple of the boat makes a fine accentuation. I shall remember to put it in."

"It seems to me that there is too much accent-

uation in an American landscape," said Grandhurst. "There is such a restless cropping out of all sorts of foliage,—such a variegated garb of green. Every tree seems to thrust itself upon you, and say, 'I'm a free American citizen, and have a perfect right to sparkle all over and cut a dash in the sunlight, even if I am out of place.'"

"That is what I feel, too," said Miss Gould, looking at her sketch sideways. "It seems to me that one must suppress much, and continually refine every thing."

"This young lady," said Grandhurst to himself, looking at his companion beneath the rim of his straw hat, which rested on his nose, "is certainly a great contrast to Miss Milton,—an agreeable contrast, I should say. Yet she has not the personal charms of that hoydenish young person. She is of an interesting type: I must study her."

"I find the Silvers very interesting," said Grandhurst.

"They are, very. Mrs. Silver is too charming for any thing."

"Mr. Silver is out of his element in America," said Grandhurst. "Every thing shocks him in this country of great possibilities and small realizations. I should not wonder if he went abroad to live."

"Yes, he is out of his element. I do hope

America will become refined some day. Why should it not? Goethe says, in 'Wilhelm Meister,' that 'practical activities are not so incompatible with a certain measure of intellectual culture as some suppose.'

"Women are better off, in an intellectual way, in America than men," said Grandhurst;— "that is, a certain class of women."

"Oh, no! I can't believe it."

"They do not receive those rude shocks to their sensibilities which men who have been brought up in Europe receive when they return to America. Women are secluded, to a certain extent. Men are forced into rude contact with the shoulder-hitters of the mart."

While this conversation went on, Miss Gould was busily occupied with her sketch. Her thin, nervous hand rubbed the charcoal hither and thither. Her delicate frame seemed to thrill to its extremities with artistic feeling. The two conversed on the effect of the drama as a means of elevating the tone of morals in America, on the progress of Spencerian philosophy, and on the last article in the "Fortnightly." Grandhurst began to think that he was enjoying himself. If Miss Gould did not go very deeply into the intellectual subjects which they discussed, he only noticed it sufficiently to recall the fact at a subsequent period. She

excited his intellectual faculties : he felt that he was breathing a rarefied atmosphere. In his psychological analysis of his companion, he did not, however, fail to notice the extreme delicacy of physique of this young American girl: and wondered whether he should be happier in the future with a woman like Miss Milton, who had a constitution which betokened strength, and freedom from nervous ailments ; or with an intellectual girl like his companion, who evidently had more mind than body. At length, the sketch was finished, and they set out through the woods to meet the Silvers. At first, the path was a clear one. It led down an open field to an old mill. The outlet of the pond had been dammed up at this point. The water escaped over the dam in several places, forming graceful cascades. The rocky bed of the stream below the dam was filled with logs of timber. Grandhurst helped his companion over the pools of water, between the logs, and then they mounted the opposite bank, and went through an opening in the wood. As they walked along, they continued their discussions on philosophical subjects. Grandhurst had already begun to feel a trifle bored. The atmosphere he was in was getting a little too rarefied. This young American girl was quite interesting for a time ; but he was not of a very vigorous constitution, and

he began to feel mentally, as well as physically, tired. He was not sure but he should find Miss Milton quite refreshing when he got home. Miss Gould was in raptures over every singular specimen of vegetation which they met; and Grandhurst was speedily laden with fungi, ferns, and distorted branches with anomalous leaves. They had to rest quite frequently; and it seemed to Grandhurst, that Miss Gould's intellectual vigor grew intenser with the decrease of her physical powers of endurance. The path which they had taken ceased at length, at a little brook, and an impenetrable wall of alders and young trees shut out their advance. After much discussion, it was decided to strike at once in the direction of the pond, and signal to the Silvers to send Bobbie with the boat. Accordingly they proceeded in what they considered to be the direction of the pond. The way grew thicker and thicker with underbrush. Grandhurst was speedily divested of his burden of fungi. This was the only thing that consoled him; for he began to fear that they were really lost. Nothing could be seen on all sides but an impenetrable swamp. Grandhurst began to have fears of the endurance of his companion. He looked at her continually from the corners of his eyes. He thought he had never seen a more dowdy-looking girl. The

feather had been brushed from her hat ; she had caught up her dress, and it hung in perfectly straight folds from her waist. Her hair had fallen in a stringy mass down her back ; and Grandhurst caught a glimpse of what she was to be in five years, — a typical, strong-minded, weak-nerved, American woman. At that moment, the remembrance of the strong physique and the joyous nature of Miss Milton made a more refreshing picture than even a glimpse of the much-desired lake would have afforded. They now struggled on in absolute silence. Many brilliant fungi were passed, with relief by Grandhurst, and with a deep sigh by his companion. They were getting deeper and deeper into the woods. Grandhurst, smothering his pride, at length concluded to halloo, in the hopes of bringing the sturdy young Snel to their assistance. He received no answer to his repeated attempts. Finally, they both sat down, completely exhausted.

“ We are in an infernal American morass,” said Grandhurst, grimly.

“ I have never been in a situation similar to this before,” said his companion, feebly.

“ You feel much exhausted ? ” said Grandhurst, quickly turning to gaze at his companion, for her voice had the tone of one who was fainting.

“ Physically, yes,” replied Miss Gould ; “ but

my intellect seems to gain renewed vigor. I wonder how the mind and the body are connected. What a mysterious band must unite them!"

"Very, very; but, Miss Gould, really we must make another attempt to get to the lake. The sun is going down, and we have been many hours wandering about."

His companion, after an effort, arose, and they took a new departure. At the end of an hour, they thought they saw the glimmer of water: it proved to be the lake. Finally they emerged from the tangled wood, and stood upon its border. It was at sunset, and the lake was like a mirror. Each wooded point was perfectly reflected in the water. The western sky was a mass of pink and gold clouds. The two unfortunates were too tired to enjoy the sight. Grandhurst immediately hallooed. A kingfisher uttered a loud cry, and flew, from his high perch on a decayed tree, over the lake, dropping a small fish which he had just captured.

"It isn't possible that the Silvers have gone home?" said Grandhurst, at length.

"They may have thought that we chose to go home, from sudden illness," replied Miss Gould, reclining upon the shore.

Grandhurst looked up and down the shores of the lake. They were closely wooded on all

sides. There was no way to get home, apparently: one could not walk along the shore, for the trees grew to the very water's edge. Presently they heard a loud shout, and Bobbie Snel rowed round a neighboring point.

"Gracious! where have you been?" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of the party. "The folks thought you had gone home; and then, when we got home, they couldn't find you, and thought something awful had happened."

"We lost our way," said Grandhurst. "Come, hurry up; this young lady must be taken home as speedily as possible,"

"I've been hurrying for the last two hours," said Bobbie, indignantly.

Grandhurst, thoroughly nettled, did not reply, but assisted Miss Gould into the boat. The latter's nervous endurance had completely given way in a fit of hysterics.

"He haint no gret," said Bobbie, to Miss Milton, speaking of Grandhurst. "He's been in furrin parts; but he gits lost in a wood, don't know how to row, and don't know any thing about base ball. I didn't let on, any way, where the pogonias grew."

CHAPTER VIII.

DIREFUL PREPARATIONS.

DICK had been influenced in his last interview with Miss Milton by a multitude of conflicting feelings. He had always known, that, notwithstanding her constant raillery, she liked him. Before her acquaintance with his old enemy, Ned Black, he had been content to live his own indolent life, and enjoy Miss Molly's society whenever he felt like it ; but now there was a change. He was not jealous ; oh, no ! He was not so silly as to fall in love, before he had gained a profession ; but he didn't like to see Miss Milton so intimate with his sworn enemy. At last it had come to this,—Ned Black, with his air of superiority, was about to elbow him out of the Milton mansion. Miss Milton, too, seemed to have been entirely gained over—fascinated, bewitched—by Black. She held him up as an example to him ! This thought rankled in his breast. He went out of his path, as he walked homeward, to hit with his cane the heads of the

obnoxious weeds, which annoyed him by their uprightness. He stopped frequently, and asked himself what had changed him so. Had he been forced out of his excessive indolence and *blasé* manner by the shafts of this young lady, who knew no more about the character of young men and their different pursuits than the veriest baby? Had he taken up exercise, to be able some day to whip his old enemy? No: he despised such a thought; he was to manifest his superiority by a higher stand in the world, which his profession would give him. Had he taken the fever of base ball? This could not be, for he still despised the game, on account of Black. He would not acknowledge that it was jealousy, nor envy, nor love: it was an uprising of the pugnacious instinct within him. He intended to whip Black, or die in the attempt. To this end, all his training was directed. His studies were given up, and he lived the life of an athlete. We have described his improvised gymnasium. He consulted his anatomical charts daily, to observe the development of certain muscles; and he devised special exercises to bring them out. His medical studies—for he was going to be a doctor—aided him materially. Besides the special exercises in his rooms, we have spoken of his base-ball playing. Pat O'Callahan ^{had} found another liberal patron in

him ; and they practised daily, in unfrequented fields, until Dick could hold the hottest ball which Pat could throw. He practised catching in unusual positions, and was rewarded by great skill, and with dislocated finger-tips. Finally, no grounder could escape him. His catching provoked the admiration of Pat. In his batting, too, he had caught the knack, after many failures : the ball was thrown up with steadiness, and the bat swung around just at the right time. The coincidences were fitting and sharp, and the ball flew with the report of the blow, which is music to a base-ball man's ears. With his exercise, the upper part of his body had become more developed than his lower limbs. He was still a weak runner. So every night, clad in a light, white flannel suit, he ran his appointed three miles, after the lights of Dornfield had been extinguished. More than once had he frightened the staid old mare of some farmer who was returning late over the road through the wood. Indeed, he was fitted to revive, even in an octogenarian, childish fears of ghosts. He pelted along with a sturdy tramp, breathing heavily through his nose, clad all in white. Once he met Mr. Snevel and Mr. Bandy, as the latter was conducting the former to his home. The reins fell from the nerveless hands of Mr. Bandy, and, notwithstanding the artificial warmth

generated by many potations, his teeth chattered. Mr. Snelvel grasped his friend's arm, and both sat staring fixedly after the fleeting spectre. Mr. Snelvel was the first to recover himself, and declaimed in a loud whisper, —

“There are more things (hic) in heaven and earth (hic) than are dreamed of in our philosophy, Horatius !”

The growth of the young man's muscles became palpable. He had discovered for himself one fact, which most young men ascertain in time, that it is necessary for the moral health to engage occasionally in some dangerous pleasure, or, rather, in some pursuit that requires fair exertion, to prevent danger. For this purpose, he went over to Farmer Snell's once a week, to ride his stallion, a fierce, half-trained brute. Here he had a hand-to-hand fight, and found a determination equal to his own. Farmer Snell told the young man that he was building a coffin for him ; but Dick was undaunted, and tore about a large, enclosed field, on the back of his fierce charger, with Mr. and Mrs. Snell, the children, and the hired laborers, mounted high on a neighboring fence, as spectators. In this way he strengthened his physical and moral fibres. It may seem a dangerous and absurd proposition to maintain, that every man needs occasionally something analogous to a fight to keep him in

good moral health ; but we appeal to the experience of every manly man. This idea lies at the bottom of the Englishman's fondness for fox-hunting, and for Alpine climbing ; the man who does not recognize this want within himself is out of trim. The nation that never goes to war becomes a third-rate power.

In the mean while, Black and he were on passable terms with each other ; they were forced to meet very often at the Miltos', and at the village entertainments. The quick eye of Miss Milton noticed that there was something between the young men. She felt indignant at Black's contempt for her old friend, even after she had ridiculed Dick's apparent effeminacy. Black occasionally saw a look in the blue eyes of Dick, which showed him that their struggle in the wood, from which he came off the victor, had not been forgotten. This look was answered by a contemptuous stare. The intimacy of Black with the Miltos increased from day to day. He was frequently seen riding with Miss Molly ; and they were continually in conference respecting the coming match. Dick was not the only person made unhappy by this intimacy. Rose Snelv pined away, from day to day. She spent much time in sitting under a broad elm by the side of the gently running river, gazing listlessly at the stream. Every thing was joyous about

her. The golden robin whistled loudly in the branches. He had caught the strain that seemed made to announce the coming again of the sweet, breezy spring. He flashed in and out, trailing after him silvery pieces of dried twine-like grass, to construct his high, swaying abode, that seemed the realization of one's childish dreams of a nest. He stopped occasionally, to flutter his wings in a delicious thrilling way before his mate, and then flung himself out of the green, swaying elm, with a joyous song. A little sparrow came down to the river's edge, and washed in a nook shaded by a bunch of marsh-marigolds. In an alder copse, two robins plastered their nest with mud from a neighboring sluggish inlet, and consulted lovingly together with a busy rustling. Each tried the nest in their turn, and flew away in different directions, in search of material to better it. The swallows bathed in the bright sunlit air, flinging themselves on their backs, turning hither and thither. The bees dropped honey laden from the nodding bunches of clover; and, after crawling a space in the health-giving sunshine, mounted in great circles above the trees, and set off in an air-line for their hives. Rose was conscious of all the sweet sounds about her; but there was something within her that made the landscape seem tame and uninteresting. Bobbie showed her a bobolink's nest,

with great pride: they had often sought for one together; but they had never found one. Rose, to her brother's disappointment, seemed to have lost her interest in bird-nesting. She seemed no longer able to take any walks, or to accompany him on his tramps in search of new flowers.

"Why, Rose," said he, in astonishment, "seems to me you can't do any thing now-a-days! Miss Milton don't think any thing of walking six miles."

"Bobbie, I don't want to hear you say that Miss Milton does this and does that."

"Why!" exclaimed her brother, in astonishment.

"Don't ask why," exclaimed his sister, with a half-repressed sob.

"I like her, first-rate," said Bobbie, putting a piece of grass in his mouth, as he lolled on the bank beside his sister. "She is always ready for any thing. She knows all about base ball, and can do every thing. Oh! I like her; but she isn't half so handsome as you are, Rose: she says so herself."

Rose smiled tearfully, as her brother insisted upon kissing her. Bobbie's affectionate heart was much troubled by the change in his sister. He noticed that Ned Black came to see her less frequently, and was very often with Miss Mil-

ton. He was much interested in the conversation of the captain of the nine with the latter, and felt proud that he could understand it thoroughly, whenever it was on ball matters. He prized the commendations which they both bestowed upon him occasionally, for his bright judgments in regard to the condition of affairs. Ned Black was his ideal of what he should be himself some day. He worshipped him devotedly, and held his head very high among the town boys, because Ned Black singled him out to run errands for the club, and generally gave him some commission which admitted him to many of its privileges. Still, he did not like Black's neglect of his sister. He grew indignant at times, and once was absolutely rude to Miss Milton, after she had turned back to rejoin him after a long and interesting *tête-à-tête* with Ned Black at the gate.

"Why, Bobbie! what is the matter with you?" she exclaimed, as she rebuked him.

"Nothing: only I'm mad."

"Why are you mad?"

"I'm mad,—because I am mad."

"Well," said Miss Milton, with a laugh, "that is an excellent reason. Come, sit right down here in the grass with me, and tell me all about it."

"Why do you want to get every thing out of

me?" said Bobbie, flinging himself on the grass, moodily.

"I don't want to get any thing out of you which you are unwilling I should know, Bobbie; but, you know, two friends can't be true friends, unless they confide in each other; and I've always told you I wanted you to treat me as a sister, and confide in me." Thus saying, she brushed back the tangled locks from his flushed face.

Bobbie put both his hands in hers. His sensitive lip quivered. He could not tell her that he was indignant with Ned Black. He felt that his sister would shrink from telling Miss Milton any thing that concerned their family matters. He did not like to be disloyal to Ned Black. He looked up at Miss Milton with such a despairing look, in which was mingled so much frank, boyish affection for her, that the young lady was fairly overcome, and put her arms about his curly head.

"Never mind now," said she: "some other time; but remember, Bobbie, two friends must always be open-hearted towards each other. You know we are not going to have any secrets from each other."

"I haven't kept any secrets from you," exclaimed her companion. "Don't you know, I've always told you every thing. I told you

how I tripped up the schoolmaster, by tying the grass in the field in loops."

"I know it, Bobbie ; and we came to the conclusion it wasn't manly, and you went and apologized, I remember : that was a brave thing to do ; and you wouldn't have done it, if it hadn't been for me."

"I got a whipping for it ; but I 'm glad I didn't sneak."

"I know you are. My friend must always be a brave, open-hearted man. Some other time, Bobbie, if you don't feel like telling me now." Thus saying, she extended her hand for him to assist her to rise.

"I love that little fellow," said Miss Milton to herself, as she watched his sturdy figure walk slowly out of her sight. "He will make a fine man, some day. There is a depth of affection in him, which, I fear, is not satisfied at home: certainly not by his father, who is a cold-hearted, disagreeable old aristocrat ; but he is very fond of his sister. I wonder why he is so moody of late when Ned Black is with me. I have heard that Black was once very attentive to Rose Snel. But, perhaps, this was village gossip. They say she does not look well. Bobbie will tell me every thing to-morrow. I am determined that that boy shall be the perfection of all that is manly, as long as I have any influ-

ence over him." As she stood gazing after the boy, she heard footsteps behind her, and turning, saw Mr. Graham. She had always known him as an extremely reserved man, who came to see them punctiliously twice a year; and she was somewhat surprised to receive a visit from him in the garden.

"I am glad to see you," said she, warmly. "Will you come into the house, or take a seat here?"

Mr. Graham said that he preferred the latter; and they speedily found themselves chatting on various subjects.

"I hear that you are going to have a Martha Washington tea-party next week, for the benefit of the base-ball nine," said Graham.

"Yes: we propose to have it on the lawn; and I hope to see you there."

"I shall certainly come," he replied, in an absent manner. "Who are the leaders in it?"

"Well, there's Mrs. Cramer and the Misses Brown, Miss Fowler and Miss Folder, and myself. Perhaps Mrs. Silver will help."

"You do not mention Miss Rose Snelver."

"No," replied Miss Milton, somewhat haughtily. "To tell you the truth, I can only get just so far with Rose. She repulses all my advances, and I have made a great many. One gets tired of being snubbed."

"I wish you could prevail upon her to take a prominent part in this festival," said Graham. "She would certainly grace it ; and, I think, she ought to be brought out more into our village society."

"Grace it ! why, she would be the beauty of the party : there is no denying that ; and I think she is making a great mistake in living in such seclusion. But, frankly, Mr. Graham, I don't see why you should ask me to force myself upon her."

"I do not ; but there are circumstances in Miss Snel's life which you do not know. In my position, as executor of her late aunt's small estate, I have become acquainted with certain unpleasant facts in regard to her father. I know, Miss Milton, you will not repeat this ; but the truth is, Mr. Snel is a self-indulgent, cold-hearted man, full of extreme courtesy and high-bred manners, but without one spark of sincerity. I know I speak strongly," said Graham, perceiving the look of astonishment upon his companion's face ; "but, as I have said, I have been brought much in relation with him recently, in regard to his daughter's small patrimony. He appropriates the interest which is due her, and which she should have for her further education and for her dress, and junkets with Mr. Bandy, whom you know to be a man given to the grati-

fication of his own tastes. Rose never murmurs at this action of her father. If this were all, she could still be happy. But her father has lately taken to drinking, and returns almost every night unable to take care of himself"—

"What, the courtly Mr. Snelv!" exclaimed Miss Milton.

"Yes; and, after helping him to find his own gate, I have stood unobserved in the moonlight, and seen that beautiful girl open the door, and, with one hand apparently repressing the throbbing of her heart, assist him in."

Graham's voice trembled a little as he said this. Miss Milton uttered an exclamation of hearty sympathy.

"You can see," continued Graham, "why this proud girl should desire to live in seclusion; why she should avoid having intimate friends; and why her conduct should appear strange to those who do not know her trying circumstances, and to one, like yourself, who has always had a wealth of affection bestowed upon you."

"I shall go to Rose at once!" exclaimed Miss Milton. "Thank you heartily, Mr. Graham. I wish we might see more of you too," she said, with sudden warmth.

Mr. Graham seemed to put aside his reserve, and thanked her heartily, and they sat and talked about the tea-party.

"I now understand Bobbie Snel's manner lately," said Miss Milton, after a pause; and she told her companion about his moods. "I have noticed them especially when Mr. Black has been here," said she, in an inquiring manner.

Graham's face grew stern as he listened.

"He is a fine little fellow," said he, after a pause. "He confessed to me that he strove to conceal his father's infirmity for a long time from his sister, and had succeeded in doing so, until Mr. Snel took to returning late at night, while he was sound asleep. Then Miss Rose strove in her turn to keep it from her brother. But it was useless; they both know all."

Graham saw Miss Milton's fine face glow at the mention of Bobbie's devotion.

"How uncharitable I have been towards Rose!" she exclaimed. "I shall insist upon loving her."

"She is a beautiful girl," said Graham: "and she has a most loving disposition; there is danger of its becoming warped in the atmosphere in which she lives. Mr. Snel is arbitrary and exacting to the last degree. Her home, believe me, is a very unhappy one." As he said this, he rose, and bade her good-evening.

At tea, she said to her uncle, as she did the honors of his table, "I thought that Mr. Graham was a cold, reserved old bachelor, who was given over to money-making."

“ What makes you think otherwise, my dear ? ”

Miss Milton related her conversation with Graham.

“ Glad to know another side. Glad to know it ! ” exclaimed her uncle, heartily. “ I ’ve always respected the fellow ; for he rose right from the ranks, by his own exertions. His word is as good as his bond, any day. Always thought, though, that he was a stiff and proud man. Well, we never know each other until circumstances show us in our true colors. Poor Rose and Bobbie ! I always disliked old Snel. He has those aristocratic feelings which I have always despised. They do well enough on English soil ; but they are out of place in America. He has a long line of ancestors, to be sure. But I ’m as proud of my humble old father and mother, as he is of his. The Miltons never owed anybody any thing, and were always honest.”

“ Mr. Graham is very much interested in Rose, I can see that,” said his niece. “ Do you suppose an old bachelor, such as he evidently is, could fall in love ? ”

“ Bless your heart, Molly ; I can fall in love this instant with you.”

“ I know it, my dear uncle,” said Molly, going to his side and kissing him. “ You have a heart formed for love and every noble thing ; but I

don't know Mr. Graham. It would be splendid for Rose, if he only could. I think he is a very good-looking man. He has that peculiar iron-gray hair which romantic young ladies admire ; and he has a very good figure. His face is not handsome ; but it is a manly one which one likes to study. Then, he is not very old, after all. It is said he can't be caught ; for all the old maids in the village have endeavored to win him."

"He is like an old trout," laughed Mr. Milton ; "but old trout, even, can be caught in the moonlight, with handsome flies."

"I don't see what the young men are thinking about, I declare," exclaimed his niece, "to neglect such a beautiful creature as Rose."

"She isn't half as good-looking as you are," said her uncle, stoutly.

"Oh, uncle !"

"Not in my eyes, my dear girl," exclaimed the old gentleman, kissing her fondly. "Molly, I've got a present for you ; but you mustn't look at it," said her uncle, presenting a little box, "until I get out of the room." Thus saying, with a hearty laugh, he went out to look at the horses.

His niece gazed at the package curiously. "He is the kindest, dearest old gentleman in the wide world : always doing something to make me happy ; anticipating even my wishes.

His spirit pervades all about us : even the servants have caught it, and bow down to me as if I were a princess. Could any one be happier than I am ? I wonder what is in this box ! A pair of solitaire ear-rings. Oh ! oh ! how beautiful ! The extravagant, dear old gentleman ! he shall have a thousand kisses right off." Thus saying, she ran after him, impulsively.

On the morning of Miss Milton's visit, Rose had been peculiarly tried. Mr. Snel's spirits in the morning were never so high as they were at night ; and, on the morning of which we speak, he felt very irritable. His elaborate shirts had not come home from the washer-woman as immaculate as he wished.

" Rose, a man could go out haying in one of these garments ; but a gentleman really does desire something better, and not unreasonably. Then, too, a man really wants a button or two : they are not absolutely necessary, you know ; but comfortable, very. Oh ! of course not, — I don't expect absolute perfection in a washer-woman, nor do I wish you to give all your time to household affairs ; but it strikes me that affairs are at rather loose ends. Now, this boor of a servant-girl, what does she mean in putting this dish at my right hand, just where I can sweep it off the table with my elbow ? This coffee would do credit to a boarding-house.

Rose, why can't we have a good cup of coffee once in a while,—say once a week?"

Mr. Snel's courtesy never allowed him to say such things to Rose before the servant: he always waited, in a dignified way, until she retired into the kitchen. Rose that morning, in the sweetest manner, endeavored to mollify her father in every possible way. The fortunate arrival of a good cup of coffee brought back a measure of contentment to his face.

"Father, can you give me a little money to-day?" said she, timidly.

"What do you want money for?"

"I need a few articles of dress, and Bobbie is out of shoes."

"I thought your aunt sent you a lot of things a few days ago; and what's the use of buying Bobbie shoes, if he runs all round the country, playing ball?"

"You said your pride would prevent your receiving things from auntie, and so I sent them back."

"You sent them back!" echoed her father, with a look of anger. "Now, what did you do that for?"

"You were so angry that she should send us such cheap things; and you told me to send them back, instantly."

"Your pardon: I never told you so."

Rose looked at her father, with a flush on her cheeks which showed him that they should have a scene; and he, accordingly, rose from the table in a dignified, and yet saddened, manner, and shut himself up in the library.

Shortly after this scene, Miss Milton's basket-wagon was standing outside the gate; and that young lady, with a happy look upon her beaming face, was at the door, desiring to see Rose. She was firmly resolved not to be repulsed or snubbed; and accordingly, not noticing the air of extreme reserve and coldness with which Miss Snelvel greeted her, plunged at once into the Martha Washington tea-party.

“We depend upon your being one of our chief directoresses, or,—what shall we call them?—chief hostesses. You know, we have all got to dress in the old-fashioned style, and wear Martha Washington caps, and little aprons. We want you to take the ice-cream table.”

“I fear you must excuse me,” said Rose, half repulsing her visitor’s enthusiastic, affectionate manner. She saw her visitor’s rich and tasteful morning-dress; and her love for Ned Black awakened a feeling of jealousy and envy that shocked even her own mind.

“The whole village will come,” continued Miss Milton; “and you know the Martha Washington dress will be ever so becoming to you.

We have been counting so much upon having you."

Rose pictured to herself the gay festival, on a beautiful summer evening, and contrasted it with the gloom of her own home; for Ned Black would certainly be at the party. If he did not come to invite her, she should be wretchedly miserable. If he knew that she was to be one of the young-lady attendants, he would not come for her. Perhaps it would be better to avoid putting him to the test; for she was not in a mood to bear a disappointment. She finally consented to be one of the attendants.

"Oh, thank you ever so much! Now I'm perfectly happy: all our arrangements seem to come out very nicely. Then, too, my uncle has just made me a present of a pair of splendid solitaires. He is always doing such nice things. I think he is the finest old gentleman in the world. He surrounds me with pleasures. You will come up to see me, won't you, to-morrow? and we will talk this party over; there are several things that must be arranged. We want to see if we can't get up some fanciful designs for the ice-creams."

Rose accompanied her visitor to her equipage, and stood under the lilacs, watching her as she whirled away. She bitterly contrasted Miss Milton's surroundings with her own. On one

side was the utmost warmth of affection and devotion ; and on the other, extreme coldness and selfishness. Could she blame Ned Black if he was repelled by her surroundings, and attracted by the happy home and the wealth of her rival ? The tears came to her eyes, as they are so apt to do in fits of self-abasement. She stole up stairs to her room, and scrutinized herself in the glass. She certainly had a better figure than Miss Milton. But was her face as good-looking ? she could not tell. In the attic, among her dear mother's old things, she remembered that there was a very rich silk, with large figures of flowers, of a quaint fashion. It had been the dress in which she had gone to the ball given in honor of Lafayette. It would be just the dress for this party ; Ned Black should see her at her best ; and she sprang up the attic stairs. How tender were the emotions awakened in the young girl's breast, as she opened the old oaken chest, and looked over her mother's things ! This was not the first time that she had done so : her tears had often spotted some delicate vesture, as she bent over the contents of the chest, longing for the affection which a mother might have bestowed upon her ; which, alas ! it had never been her good fortune to know, for her mother had died when she was a mere child. There were rich, brocaded

silk gowns ; old-fashioned, large bonnets that brought a smile to Rose's lips even when her eyes trembled with tears. There were delicate little slippers in great numbers ; for Mrs. Snelv evidently had a beautiful foot, and liked to indulge her womanly vanity. Rose frequently sat down upon the hard attic floor, and tried on these slippers ; they were a trifle too large for her. Then she would kiss them, and replace them tenderly. In the chest was laid away the wedding gown: It seemed so small to Rose, in its flattened state, with the highly embroidered sleeves folded over the front of the bodice, with a sad suggestion of a human form. Perhaps the mother, in another, more beautiful state of existence, saw her beautiful daughter bending over her earthly garments, and was glad even to witness her sorrow, from a knowledge of a glorious future state which would be hers when time was annihilated. While Rose bent over the chest, communing with the past, the day outside was exactly like the one on which her mother had been married, a half a century ago. The shadows of the soft, fleecy clouds pulsated on the green banks ; the songs of the bobolinks came up from the clover-fields ; the cheery call of the ploughman to his oxen resounded from the upland ; the swallows twittered in the eaves ; and the soft breeze whispered,

in the same tone, to the old elm in front of the house. The mother might have walked down the garden path, knocked with the old knocker, and ascended to the attic, and found all just as if she had merely awakened from a dream, save the presence of this beautiful girl, who bent in tears over her mother's antiquated dresses. Rose gazed and gazed. A bee, which had entered the attic through some broken window-pane, buzzed against the old skylight, or made impatient excursions in a shaft of sunlight. The soothing noise of his wings, and the alternating gloom of the changing cloud-shadows, the absence of jarring sounds, together with the sight of the garments of one long at peace, always could calm the most impetuous emotions of Rose's breast. After a long reverie, she took out the dress she was in search of, and, carrying it to her room, arrayed herself.

It fitted her lithe form to perfection. The high ruff parted to show her pearly throat; and the open bosom, fringed with rich old lace, became her to perfection. Could Ned Black find any fault with her, in such a costume? With all the strange lack of insight of a young girl, she imputed considerations to her lover which should have made her despise him, instead of seeking to pander to them.

CHAPTER IX.

A MARTHA WASHINGTON TEA-PARTY.

GRANDHURST found much to interest him in the village of Dornfield. Mr. Milton insisted upon his staying with him, — at least, until the ball-match ; and, therefore, the young man lingered. He walked about the country in English shoes, which the country beaux laughed at, in ignorance of the fact that they were the proper things to have. They ridiculed his large shade-umbrella, and whispered, “ You know ” and “ aw ” to each other, behind his back, blissfully unconscious that their pronunciation and provincialisms were equally laughable to the returned traveller. Grandhurst was very critical of Miss Milton : he saw much in her to dislike. She was too demonstrative, and was wanting in the fine equipoise which marks a woman of culture and refinement. He left her often in a fit of indignation, to seek the society of the Silvers and of Miss Gould. But he found, after an hour or two, that they stimulated his æsthetic faculties

to so high a degree that he came back to Miss Milton to be refreshed, and to criticise anew her hoydenish ways.

“ Well, are you going to this Martha Washington tea-party ? ” said Mr. Silver to him one evening.

“ Yes : I suppose so. Somewhat of a bore, though. The Miltons are immensely interested in it. The old gent enters into it as if the future of this village depended upon it.”

“ He is a queer, old, good-souled creature,” said Mr. Silver, rising from his chair, with an air of genteel invalidism. “ It strikes me that a good deal of his rush and gush is put on, don’t you ? ”

“ O Francis ! I don’t think so,” exclaimed Mrs. Silver. “ I think he is a real good man. He certainly does every thing for his niece.”

“ Like most women,” said her husband, “ you bring forward citations to disprove what I don’t advance. I grant that he is good, attentive to his niece, and all that. But what I maintain is, that he has a habit of enthusiasm which he has cultivated. My question is, whether it is the true thing or not.”

“ Perhaps it is a little affected,” replied Mrs. Silver ; “ but I think that there is much that is genuine. It is a pity that he hasn’t more of the reserve and courtly manners of Mr. Snelv.”

“ Snelv’s manners are perfect,” said Grand-

hurst. "I noticed he addressed you last evening, Mrs. Silver, with an air which would have done credit to any court in Europe."

"You know he was an *attaché* once of our Legation in Paris, don't you?" said Mr. Silver.

"No: was he? Why, I must make further advances to the old gent. Miss Rose, too, is a fine girl. By Jove! how she would shine in England! She is not disposed to talk much, however. I haven't devoted much attention to her yet; been so deusedly bored by all this base-ball enthusiasm. Shall try to see more of her."

"Get out your genealogical tree," said Mr. Silver. "Snevel is perched upon the topmost limb of his. He is aristocratic to the last degree. The servants who have been in his house tell queer stories."

"Oh, don't, Francis!" laughed Mrs. Silver, in a deprecating way. "Mr. Grandhurst will think we are village gossips. They do tell funny stories, however. You remember, Francis, how our last cook, who had also been a servant of the Snevels, used to talk about the master's fine manners, and the starvation in his kitchen?"

"Yes; but these stories were evidently based upon pique and resentment. I like old Snevel: there is an air of refinement about him which is refreshing in this country."

"He is a grand old cock," said Grandhurst. "I shall cultivate him: they say he is a little given to the bottle."

"Oh, that's a slander!" said Mr. Silver. "I shouldn't blame him much, if he did drink in this prosy, do-nothing place."

"Why, Francis!" exclaimed Mrs. Silver, looking up from her copy of "Middlemarch." Mr. Silver fell back into his arm-chair, and put his finger-ends in juxtaposition, as if he were ready to maintain his position.

"He looks as if he meditated it too, doesn't he, Mr. Grandhurst?" said Mrs. Silver, giving her husband a little affectionate thrust with the paper-cutter. "If you hadn't happened upon us, in our out-of-the-way retreat, to refresh us with news from dear Florence, I think Francis and I should have perished like babes in the wood."

The Martha Washington tea-party was destined to make a great sensation. It was universally acknowledged that it was a much more refined affair to have than the fair, which was about to be held in Milltown for the benefit of their nine. After all, there was a very good reason for the Milltownites not having a Martha Washington tea-party: no one had any ancestors over there. There were no old gowns, no rich, brocaded silks, no colored stockings, which

had been handed down. It was very easy to see why they inclined to a fair.

"This base-ball business is destined to unite all the diverse interests in the village," said Tom Milton to Grandhurst, as they rode over the hills. "Dornfield has been a cliquey place; but this ball business, and the Martha Washington, bid fair to bring the folks together." Every one did seem to take hold in real earnest. The farmers' wives among the hills looked over their collections of old garments, in order to fit out Hetty or Ann for the party. The old grandmothers were consulted, and grew eloquent over their memories.

"The ladies' dresses were smaller in those days than they are now, weren't they?" asked Dick Softy of Grandmother Snell, one day as he came into the house, a moment after his weekly exercise with the untamed horse.

"Wall, they hadn't any flummery overskirts in them days, and the dresses were shorter."

"Sorter stiff, weren't they?" said Farmer Snell.

"Wall, they laced up considerable in them days: wore stays. Then, I remember the stockings: they had a clock on the sides, a sort of seam embroidered; and some of 'em were open worked. Bless you! I used to wear black silk stockings."

"You must have looked fine, indeed," said Dick.

"She was a great beauty in her day," whispered Farmer Snell.

"I remember," said Grandmother Snell, with a far-off look over the pastures, "the first party your father," pointing to Farmer Snell, "took me to. It was about this season o' the year. I wore a low-necked, blue, brocaded silk. My hair was arranged in great puffs, and held up with a great turtle-shell comb. I wore white stockings, open worked, and I had the prettiest slippers good money could buy. I remember your father said I was the prettiest girl in the room, and there was a powerful lot of 'em; some in ruffs, and some without. Mrs. Cramer's mother was there in a white silk; and Mrs. Forder's mother, in a wine-colored one. Some one, in a buff-colored silk with great figures. I disremember who it was. Who could it have been? I shall think soon. Wall, now, that's strange. I can see the whole party before me as clear as day. Who could it have been? I came home through the grass lot, and ruined my bronzed slippers; and wa'n't my mother mad? But it was your father's fault: he wouldn't let me go home in the wagon with the rest of the girls. Who could it have been?"

"Now, what is a *Martha Washington tea-*

party?" asked Dick, who was a great favorite of the old lady.

"Lord bless you! Caps. That's what it is: caps."

"Caps?" repeated Dick.

"Yes: caps, and aprons, and old-fashioned dresses, at a tea-party."

"Oh! that's it," repeated Dick. "Couldn't imagine what it was."

"It will be fine," said the old lady, in a tone of enthusiasm. "Folks are coming back to the old times. Wonder if the young fellows are going in knee-breeches and stockings. They ought to go."

"Sam and Hetty," said Farmer Snell to his tall son and angular daughter, "you go upstairs, and dress up in the old fashion. Your mother, Hetty, will let you take her wedding gown; and, Sam, you will find the knee-breeches and stockings in the old trunk beneath the stairs."

"No, you don't!" said Sam.

"Yes, do," said Dick, seconding Farmer Snell.

"I'm off," exclaimed Sam, disappearing through the window.

The politic ones in Dornfield commended Miss Milton's idea of such a party more and more, as the time approached for its occurrence. It happened that many families which had hith-

erto held less prominent positions in society than others now came to the front, by reason of their accumulated heirlooms. And so the village society promised for once to meet on a level of good feeling,

It was to be expected that the Milltownites should ridicule the affair, and call it an old-grandmothers' tea fight. The ladies, nevertheless, in Milltown were intensely excited about it, and talked of sending over spies to give accounts of the dresses. They were dissuaded from this step by their lords, who remarked, cynically, that all they had to do was to let the old maids in Dornfield alone, and all would come out.

At length the much-expected afternoon arrived. The day was a beautiful one in June. The Miltos' lawn had been lately clipped, and was soft as velvet. Mr. Milton had had a large tent spread, and had planted his azaleas in pots on the green turf beneath the canvas. The azaleas, covered with a mass of white, scarlet, pink, and mauve colored flowers, had been carefully trimmed in pyramids and globes, and excited the admiration of the rapidly arriving guests. Upon the lawn in front of the house were placed little tables, with chairs ; and in the midst of the evergreens were the tables at which ice-cream, tea and coffee, and other refreshments, could be obtained. Among the young ladies

who were dressed in Martha Washington caps, white aprons, and short dresses, were to be seen Miss Milton and Rose Snel. Miss Milton was the pride of her uncle's heart, as she moved gracefully hither and thither. His eyes glistened with pride, and he held up his teacup repeatedly, to have the pleasure of seeing her cross the sward in order to reach him.

"She looks deusedly like an English girl," said Grandhurst to his friends the Silvers, who had taken one of the tables. "There's nothing American-looking about her."

"Except her beauty," said Mrs. Silver, with a slight tone of patriotism; "for you must acknowledge the beauty of American girls."

"It is generally of another kind," said Mr. Silver; "a kind of beauty like that of some exquisitely handsome lilies, of which the corolla slips off at the touch, and leaves only bare, fragmentary stamens."

"Fine face she has," said Mrs. Silver, looking up at Miss Milton as she passed, with a beaming look; "one of those faces which compels you to believe that it is the exponent of all that is lovely and good within."

"My wife is in love with that girl," said her husband. "Women have their loves among women, you know. Now, there's Miss Snel: she is much more to my taste."

The two looked in the direction which he pointed. Rose was helping to ice-cream, at a table beside a rookery, which was covered with a mass of beautiful ferns. The white cap, with its large, full top and its snowy frill, was placed upon the back of her head, and her blonde hair was puffed up somewhat more than usual in front, and partly escaped, notwithstanding her precautions, in one long wavy curl behind. She wore a high ruff, and her mother's lilac, figured silk, with its short skirts ; and her dainty feet were clad in bronzed slippers, with pink roses for bows.

"She is handsome, — by Jove!" exclaimed Grandhurst. "A Marie Antoinette at Petit Trianon."

"No : you mean a beautiful rose of Dornfield, in America," said Miss Milton, who, in passing, heard and understood his remark.

"Patriotic now and always," said Mrs. Silver, smiling. "Molly, your party is going to be a great success. How lovely those azaleas are ! and what a pretty sight the people make upon the lawn !"

"Yes, the azaleas are pretty, and I think we shall have a fine time ; but what a pity it is that all the people didn't come in old-fashioned clothes ! Why couldn't every one enter into the thing heartily, and break away from the present

tyranny of fashion? Now, Mrs. Silver, you have come with your long train, and your costume *à la mode*; why couldn't you have dressed, just for once, in the old style?"

"I haven't any old-style dress," exclaimed Mrs. Silver: "all my dresses were made in Paris."

"Well, Mr. Silver might have come in knee-breeches."

"Sorry I couldn't," said Mr. Silver; "but the thinness of my limbs, and the abundant wardrobe of a London tailor, effectually prevented me."

"What a pity!" said Miss Milton. "And you Mr. Grandhurst, also, in your London coat. Why, I certainly thought I should see you in knickerbockers. They do wear knickerbockers abroad, don't they? It is so hard to get many Americans of the present day to think and act for themselves. Now, there comes Farmer Snell and his wife, dressed as they should be,—in the real old style. I'm going to thank them from the bottom of my heart. I declare they do look funny, though. I mustn't laugh. Now, it is too bad: you can see the folks are looking at them in an amused way. They will be the only ones here dressed in the real old style. I must run and make my uncle put on his knee-breeches, to make Mr. Snell feel less awkward." Thus saying, she ran in the direction of the house.

"Good-hearted girl!" exclaimed Mrs. Silver. "She hit you, Francis; and you also, Mr. Grandhurst."

"I choose to show my independence in being hit," said Mr. Silver. "Now look at old Snell. Should you want me, or any human being, to make such a guy of himself?"

Farmer Snell and wife, not being able to persuade Sam and Hetty to go in their grandfather's and grandmother's clothes, actuated by the enthusiasm for old times which the conversations of late had excited,—for Grandmother Snell had kept them up until the small hours, for many nights, during the past week, listening to her reminiscences,—had determined to go to the party themselves in the old style, notwithstanding the protestations of Sam and Hetty. Accordingly, Mr. Snell put on a shirt with immense ruffles, and knee-breeches, with black silk stockings, together with old shoes with silver buckles, and took his large felt hat under his arm; for Sam set up such a shout when he saw it on his father, that he almost shook a well-settled determination. Mrs. Snell wore a red-sprigged muslin, with a calash well over her forehead. Her hair was arranged in great puffs, which entirely filled the capacious interior of her bonnet. She wore over her muslin an immense red cape of light material, and bore a

staff with a silver handle, which reached nearly to her head. Sam drove his father and mother and Hetty down to the village in a closed carry-all. Hetty was dressed in the modern style, in a very full pink silk, with her hair done up in crimps; and Sam was in a full suit of broad-cloth, with a bright neck-tie. Sam, however, did not intend to go into the grounds of the Miltowns' with his father and mother. He loitered behind, and peeked through the hedges to witness their reception. As he saw them go up the walk,—stared at by the fashionables, and laughed at by the young village maidens who had been his companions at previous Dornfield festivities,—he broke out from the hedgerow, kicked up his heels with a gesture of fun mingled with a comical expression of anguish, and set off towards home, repeating, “Dad and ma have made fools of themselves, sure!”

Miss Milton found her uncle on the piazza, talking with old Justice Tooms, from Milltown. She hurriedly informed him of the arrival of Mr. Snell.

“I’ll go and put on a pair of knee-breeches, right off!” he exclaimed. “Glad you put me in mind of it, Molly. Farmer Snell is an excellent man. I wouldn’t have his feelings hurt for the world. If they laugh at him, they must laugh at me too. I thought of doing it before. It was

the proper thing ; and Farmer Snell and Mistress Snell have given us a good rebuke, by their independence.” Thus saying, he excused himself, and ran off like a boy.

“Why didn’t you come in knee-breeches, too, Mr. Tooms?” Miss Milton exclaimed. “You would have looked so grand in them.”

“It don’t make any difference what we old men wear,” replied the justice, taking a pinch of snuff. “Why don’t you pitch into the young chaps, hey?”

“We worship age to-day,” said Miss Milton. “Oh, dear, dear! I’ve forgotten that I left Mr. Grandhurst holding a pitcher of milk in one hand, and a sugar-bowl in the other. ‘What a bore’ it will be! And ‘how deused awkward!’” Thus saying, she disappeared, with a quick courtesy.

The old justice laughed, as he shook his head at her, and then fell to dreaming of a Martha Washington tea-party, way in the past ; and of a young girl of whom Miss Milton suddenly reminded him.

Farmer Snell and wife found it very awkward, as they advanced up the lawn, to be the cynosure of all eyes. They met the Misses Brown in fashionable modern party attire, with merely little apologies for caps upon their heads, who laughed politely as they bowed. Mrs. Cramer

immediately ran out of a group of observers, who were convulsed with laughter, and, with smiling face, began to closely examine Mrs. Snell's attire.

"Why, my dear, where did you get all these things? Oh, my! ha, ha! Well, now, isn't that curious,—stick and all?"

Mr. Milton by this time advanced down the lawn, clad in old-fashioned costume,—with wig, ruffles, and ornamented coat, slit very high in the back, and his fine calves showing to great advantage in white hose. He greeted Mrs. Snell with the deep courtesy of the olden time; putting one hand upon his heart, and taking a dancing step.

"Now, this is what I call doing the right thing," he exclaimed. "Dame Snell, allow me to conduct you to the tea-table." Thus saying, he offered his arm, and the two swept through the guests, who ceased to look amused. Mr. and Mrs. Snell had evidently done the proper thing.

"Wished I had put on my mother's brocaded gown!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown. "Great deal finer than that sprigged muslin of Mrs. Snell."

After the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Snell, a few more of the old inhabitants arrived in the costumes of the past. The waitresses were generally dressed in Martha Washington attire; but the village maidens and their beaux were rigged out in their best modern costumes.

"It would be a pretty affair," said Grandhurst, looking at the groups of people scattered among the trees, and speaking to Miss Gould, who happened to be beside him, "if there was only something distinctive in the costumes,—something characteristic in the surroundings. But there is the modern house of the Miltons, with its French roof, and its American, senseless combination of a Roman villa and the Parthenon; and here we are in an English garden, with people wandering about in heterogeneous attire. Now, in Normandy, one could see something at a village *fête*."

"Oh, how I should love to go to Normandy!" said Miss Gould, with a sigh. "There isn't any to see in America, is there, Mr. Grandhurst? Do you suppose we shall ever get over our chromo civilization?"

Her companion thought that something might come out of the whirlpool in the future.

"Even this old costume—this Martha Washington affair—has nothing innate about it: it is a mongrel affair,—part English and part French, of the age of Louis Philippe," said he.

Presently, the lawn was covered with villagers, and the *fête* was at its height. A band discoursed sweet music for a time; and then played for dancers, in the long dining-hall of the house. The minister of the prominent church

in Dornfield, who had been lately preaching a series of sermons against the sin of dancing, thereby provoking much criticism from the more liberal church societies in Milltown, had been talking in a merry way with the chief ladies of his church, as they ate their ice-cream, in a corner of the piazza. But his countenance immediately lengthened when he heard the dance-music, and all the faces of those about him sympathized.

“I have my fears about Mr. Milton’s conduct in these ball matters,” said Deacon Brown. “I fear that he is encouraging dangerous notions among the young men. There is an increase of drinking and idleness.”

“I fear so, too,” said the minister, with a deep sigh. “The young men are not at the prayer-meetings, and I see even Richard Softy, our Sunday-school teacher, whirling in the dance.”

Dick certainly did not look very unhappy, or full of compunction, as he danced with Rose Snelvel on his arm. He had lounged about for a long time, feeling wretchedly, as he beheld Ned Black and Miss Milton much together. But a sudden determination he had formed to flirt with Rose had somehow given him great pleasure. Wherever he went with Miss Snelvel, her beauty attracted immense attention, much to Dick’s delight; for his appearance with her might awaken unpleasant feelings in Miss Molly’s breast. Rose,

on her part, was actuated by the same motives. She had cast appealing glances at Ned Black, earlier in the afternoon, as she helped him with ice-cream, which he seemed always to desire for some one at a distance ; but she had met no response in the look of his handsome eyes. He was extremely attentive to Miss Milton ; and that young lady seemed to be very well pleased to have him with her. Rose proudly repressed the desire to retire silently, and seek her quiet room 'to pour out her anguish ; and met the resolve of Dick with a similar resolution. He fanned her, as she languished upon his arm, during the pauses in the dance. They sought nooks which were in full view of people in general, and especially of Ned Black and Miss Milton, who were dancing together, and were apparently absorbed in each other's society. Their conduct was much criticised by the ladies who boarded at the old inn. "Miss Snel's pretty limbs were too much displayed by her old-fashioned dress. Shouldn't think she would be there without her father or a matron. By the way, where was her father ?" As if to answer this question for himself, Mr. Snel appeared upon the lawn, in the beautiful glow of the evening. He was dressed with extreme care in the costume of an English gentleman. His silk hat had a very broad brim ; and, as he took it off, with a long

wave of the arm,—and he did so very frequently,—one was conscious of the perfect propriety of his lavender gloves. Every one could see, however, that Mr. Snelvel was much the worse for liquor. It was, undoubtedly, not common liquor, such as could be obtained in low places: it was the best old wine at a late dinner at Mr. Bandy's; but there was no doubt that Mr. Snelvel was intoxicated. The news spread like lightning among the guests. Ned Black saw him among the first, as he went out to get a glass of water for Miss Milton. His better nature prompted him to endeavor to induce him to go home, or to retire into some out-of-the-way chamber, and bathe his head in cold water, in order to spare Rose the shock of meeting him. But he said to himself, "The old cock won't go with me. I should only provoke a scene. I don't see as I'm called upon in any way." So he went back to Miss Milton. Mr. Snelvel made his way into the ball-room, with an excessive manifestation of courtesy, bowing very low to the old ladies, and, in his effort at recovering his would-be-erect position, running into them, much to their consternation. The dancers stood aside for him with alacrity, and he made his zig-zag way down the hall; passed by Rose, who sat like a statue, cold and motionless, with deep rings about her eyes; and, without discovering her,

disappeared upon the piazza. Rose had been in an unnatural state of gayety ; and had drawn the attention of all upon herself, by her fascinating ways ; and had provoked much criticism, as we have seen. She was conscious of her father's coming, by a strange presentiment, and lifted her eyes, in the act of gazing coquettishly at Dick, only to see Mr. Snelvel reeling through the room, and to behold the scrutinizing looks and the evidences of scandal ready to burst forth. The room seemed to swim around, and the figures of the people were turned into demons, who pointed at her with their long fingers, and danced like Indians about a victim at the stake. She uttered a low moan, and fell in a fainting-fit. Dick instantly seized her in his arms, and bore her out into the air. Miss Milton rushed to aid him, leaving Black standing against the wall. The people ran together in knots. Dick whispered to Miss Milton, "I will get her father out of the way ;" and forced his way out of the crowd which gathered around them. In doing so he ran against Black, who was coming forward with a glass of water.

"Look here," said Black ; "look out where you are going, won't you ?"

Dick elbowed him to one side, with a contemptuous look, and hastened in the direction of Mr. Snelvel. He found that person in the

charge of Mr. Milton, and, on rapidly explaining the state of affairs, found a ready coadjutor in him. Mr. Milton's warm heart was excessively pained by the occurrence.

Rose in a short while recovered. Bobbie, who had had the superintendence of the post-office which had been established at a corner of the lawn, for the humorous or romantic letters which it was customary to send on such occasions, heard that his sister had fainted. He sprang over the lawn, forced his way to her, and put his arms tightly about her. Rose smiled faintly as she met his eager look, and asked him to take her home. Miss Milton, in the most sympathetic way, took her to her own chamber, and tried to prevail upon her to rest there. She showed her her easy-chair, with all its appliances for invalids ; sent for some wine ; and took both of Rose's tremulous hands in her own warm ones. But Rose was firm in her intention, and presently was conducted home by her brother. Miss Milton, after leaving Rose, met Mr. Graham. The look of pallor upon his face, and his impetuous manner of questioning, betrayed his secret to her in an instant. And her sorrow for Rose was quickly turned to a feeling of joy ; for there was happiness in store for her beautiful friend yet, and there was no danger of her losing Dick as a friend.

Hardly had the gossip and excitement subsided, before another event occurred. In sending her invitations, by some accident Miss Milton had omitted the name of O'Callahan. The latter instantly felt that the Miltons were ashamed of him, and were only looking upon him as a tool. He drank savagely of the liquor which Black had secretly put in his way, in a closet adjoining their rooms. As he drank, he brooded more and more upon his wrongs. He would be even with the Yankees yet. He would see if they could treat him with disdain, because he was a poor Irish boy. The O'Callahans were descended from the early kings of Ireland. Presently he sprang up, dressed himself in his light pantaloons, which clung to limbs not of the straightest, until they reached his pointed, turn-up-at-the-end shoes, when they suddenly flared out like a sailor's; and, seizing a stick, started for the scene of festivities. He was in his most quarrelsome mood, and reeled over the grounds with his hat over his brows, elbowing savagely all who happened to be in his way. He pushed the people aside at the entrance of the ball-room, and strode among the crowd of dancers, with his hat still upon his head, bestowing scowls right and left.

"There's Pat!" exclaimed Miss Milton, clasping her hands. "Oh, dear! I forgot to in-

vite him, I declare! and he has been drinking again, and is evidently furious at our neglect. What shall I do? He will provoke uncle by his manners. Where is Mr. Black?" Thus saying, she ran about in search of the latter. Meanwhile Pat had offered his arm, with a real Irish skip of his legs, to Miss Hetty Snell, to lead her forth to the dance, still keeping his hat savagely over his eyebrows. As the young girl drew away in affright, he shook his stick above his head.

"I'm a raal Irish gentleman of the thtrue sort, and demane meeself in asking a Yankee to dance with me. Shoo!" Thus saying, he stamped his foot upon the floor.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Miss Milton, looking in at the window, in her wild flight after Ned Black, "where can he be? Pat will ruin the whole party; and we shall have such a scene! No one must offend him! No one must! I'm so afraid my uncle will forget himself."

Pat presently, in a lordly way, passed out of the ball-room, and sought the place of refreshments. His eye presently caught sight of the place where tea and coffee had been dispensed; and, walking up to it unsteadily, he shouted, "Is there no one to do the honors of the evening? thin, be Jabers, Pat O'Callahan is fit to do them for himself!" and he essayed to pour out

^a cup of coffee. While thus engaged, Miss Milton came upon him suddenly.

“Why, Mr. O’Callahan ! why did you not come earlier ?” she exclaimed. “Let me pour out that coffee for you. You must have some ice-cream too.” Thus saying, she beckoned to the young girl who had taken Rose’s place at the refreshment table.

Pat glared at her ; and then made a motion as if he would remove his hat, the beauty of Miss Milton evidently making an impression upon him.

“I was not axed,” he replied, cocking his hat afresh at the remembrance of his wrongs.

“By some oversight, your invitation was not sent ; but it was a mistake, Pat. We all wanted you.”

“It’s blarney,” said Pat, savagely.

“Indeed, it is not,” replied Miss Milton, heaping delicacies upon his plate.

“I ’ll belave you, if you ’ll dance with me.”

“Dance with you !” exclaimed Miss Milton, with a flutter of apprehension.

“Yes : right among the folks there, time with the music, keeping step with the best of ‘em.”

At that moment Ned Black came in sight. His heart gave a quick leap, as he caught sight of O’Callahan. In leaving him a supply of

liquor, he had never suspected that he would be so bold as to force himself into the presence of the Miltons. He thought that Miss Milton looked at him in an accusing way ; but it was only a suggestion of his own conscience. She was delighted to meet him ; for he would see to O'Callahan. The latter greeted the approach of Black, at first, with an assumption of great boldness ; but presently allowed himself to be led into the kitchen, where he was entertained in a right hospitable way by some of his own country-women.

Notwithstanding these unpleasant occurrences, the Martha Washington party was a decided success. The afternoon had closed with a beautiful, glowing sunset ; and the company strolled over the lawn, and visited the azalea tent, or sat upon the broad veranda, listening to the sweet music. The early twilight drew light, pearly, green lines down the lines of hedges, and around the masses of trees, as if they were its last line of fortifications against the encroaching darkness. The full moon rose in the purple madder of the East, and slowly cleared her serene countenance of its red, warlike tint, as she ascended into the deeper indigo of the clear sky. Lovers paired off, and found out-of-the-way nooks, or walked slowly beneath the overarching elms of the avenues. The elders discussed

the dresses and manners of the old times, or watched the dancers go through their evolutions in cotillons or Virginia reels. Mrs. Snell and Mr. Milton led one of the former, and were much observed. Mrs. Snell was delighted. The bright color mounted to her cheeks, and she could hardly rest a moment on her feet. She courtesied very low to Mr. Milton's old-time bow; and, as they turned, her dress flew partly open in front, and showed her beautiful damask petticoat. Mr. Snell, also, showed astonishing aptitude, with Miss Milton as a partner.

"Snell, this is glorious!" exclaimed Tom Milton.

"It is, and no mistake," replied Farmer Snell, in a glow of enthusiasm.

"The rest of these folks, who didn't have the independence to come right out in their old clothes," said Mr. Milton, with a hearty laugh, "aren't having half so good a time."

In truth, they didn't seem to be so joyous. The farmer folk had begun to draw to one side among themselves; the literary people of Dornfield were gathered about the Silvers; and the members of the strict church sat around the minister, looking very solemn.

"These two sad occurrences," said Deacon Brown, "convince me that Mr. Milton is doing

wrong in countenancing, to such a degree, this ball excitement."

"I fear," said the minister, in a ghostly whisper, "that Mr. Milton does not throw himself upon the side of temperance; and he furthermore shows a spirit of rivalry which bids fair to alienate us still farther from our neighbors of Milltown."

"I keep my son carefully away from base ball," said Deacon Brown. "He is a good boy, and shows no desire to run to matches."

"Your son Moses is a fine boy," said the minister. "Very regular at church."

"While I live, he shall always be," said the deacon, with pride.

While the appearance of Pat did not provoke much comment, Mr. Snelvel's condition was the universal topic of conversation. It was discovered that Mr. Graham went home with him.

"Doesn't it strike you," said Mrs. Cramer, addressing the group about her generally, "that Mr. Graham goes to the Snelvels' pretty often? I notice that he casts many glances at Rose."

"He is the executor of her aunt's will," said Miss Susan Brown, a maiden lady, who was much interested in Graham.

"Well, I pity Rose and Bobbie, I declare," said Mrs. Cramer. All present joined in sym-

pathy with her. Miss Susan Brown hoped that it would prove a kind dispensation ; for she thought that Rose had always been too proud.

Towards the end of the evening, Ned Black secured Miss Milton's company, and they had a delightful stroll over the lawn together. He found no difficulty in persuading her to stay out with him ; for she was fascinated by his society, and by the splendor of the full moon. As they stood looking at the fountain in the moonlight, Dick Softy came up to bid Miss Milton good-night. He turned his back, contemptuously, upon Black, and did not answer an observation which Black addressed to him. The guests were beginning to depart, and Miss Milton requested her escort to conduct her to the house. Black did so ; and then started hastily down the avenue, and overtook Dick.

CHAPTER X.

THE DIREFUL FIGHT.

“I WANT an apology for your insults, sir,” he said, in a suppressed whisper.

Dick turned about in the moonlight, and surveyed his antagonist.

“I am not conscious of having insulted you,” he replied, looking at Black calmly.

“You struck me as I was carrying that glass of water. You treated me in a contemptuous way before that young lady.”

“I could readily give reasons for so doing,” said Dick; “but I don’t choose to.” And he turned his back: as he did so, Black grasped him, insolently, by the shoulder: but he had hardly done so before Dick had turned, and given him a blinding blow between the eyes. He staggered about the road; and then, suddenly recovering, took off his coat.

“Not here: there are too many people,” said Dick, in his old, languid manner. “Let us go behind yonder wood.” Thus saying, he got

over the fence, and led the way to the scene of their old encounter.

Their way led through a clover-field. The dew was gathering thickly ; and the pink blossoms of the clover, which were stirred and crushed by their footsteps, gave forth a fresh odor. They disturbed a stray cow, which had broken away from her tethering in a neighboring barn, and was enjoying a feast in the moonlight. Upon a rock, in a neighboring pasture, a whippoorwill, quickly uttered his pulsating cry, which was answered from beyond the green woods, right beneath the moon. Night-hawks cleaved the air, with wings quickly changing in purpose. The two young men passed an old farmhouse, with its well-sweep, beside which stood two lovers, looking at the moon ; and struck across the fields, in a diagonal direction, towards the wood. They marched along, with grim countenances ; and their dark shadows, clearly cut in the bright moonlight, strode over huckleberry bushes, and through thick bushes, as if they were great demons leading captive two pygmies.

“ Here is the place,” said Dick, suddenly turning, and throwing aside his coat.

“ You have a very good memory,” said Black, sarcastically.

“ Yes, and I propose you shall remember it

this time," said Dick ; "for I intend to whip you once in my life."

He had hardly spoken before his opponent struck at him with his left hand. Dick, suddenly throwing his head forward and to the right, warded the blow ; and, throwing his left leg forward at the same instant behind Black, with a quick movement of his arm threw him heavily. Black arose, somewhat stunned, and made a more cautious attack. He succeeded in hitting his opponent several times ; but they were light blows, while Dick's made themselves felt on his eyes and nose. Dick, with a thrill of savage satisfaction, gradually began to feel his superiority ; and the new man, which had been slowly awakening in him, came strongly to the front. The two men parried each others' blows, with all the skill in boxing which both possessed, the dull thud of their hits seeming to be quickly appropriated by the groups of silent trees. The noise of their heavy breathing, and their restless tramp on the grass, did not ascend over the hillside which protected the hollow in which the fight took place. Occasionally, a crow had a mind to rest in his night flight upon the top of a neighboring tall pine ; but swung off, from his intended perch, with outstretched claws, when he beheld the struggling forms beneath him. Black began to feel one of his

eyes closing, from the swelling of the flesh upon his cheek: his first impulse was always to win at all hazards. He accordingly closed with Dick, by a quick movement, before the latter could prevent him. The two men held each other by the shoulders at arms' length, and swayed from side to side, striving to throw each other. But Black's object was not to throw his opponent by wrestling. He felt, to his astonishment, that the pulpy, effeminate Dick Softy had suddenly grown hard and wiry, and he found him more than his master at wrestling. He drew Dick closer and closer, by edging his arms along those of his opponent; and, when his head was in near proximity to Dick's, he threw his head upward, and then down, intending to strike Dick in the temples with his hard frontlet. He had seen strong men felled in that way in a close fight, as if they had been struck with a hammer. Dick knew the trick; Pat O'Callahan had shown it to him; and, dodging his head to one side, he fell over upon his back, throwing Black over his head. Dick arose to denounce his opponent for his under-handed method of fighting; but Black was stretched motionless upon the sward, his white face gleaming in the moonlight. With a quick shudder, Dick bent over him, and loosened the collar about his neck, and called to him in a low,

hoarse voice. He saw that, in falling, his opponent's head had been brought in contact with a stone. Dick ran to a neighboring brook, and brought water in his hat, and dashed it upon Black's face. Even in the moonlight, he could see that he had punished him severely; for his face was much distorted. Black at length opened his eyes, feebly.

"I hope I didn't hurt you severely," said Dick, in a tone of compunction.

Black sat up, in a dizzy manner, and held his head in his hands.

This gesture touched Dick more than words. He knelt down beside his late enemy, and bathed his face with his handkerchief, which he had dipped in the brook. Black did not answer; but finally fell back again in a swoon. Dick, thoroughly alarmed, started to his feet, and ran across the fields to the neighboring farm-house. He found the inmates about retiring for the night; but, on his appeal, two of the laboring men, with a tired yawn, hurriedly drew on their boots, and went back with him to Black. Dick, as he ran, denounced himself for his late pride in the discovery of his superiority. The feeling of exultation had turned in the hour of triumph to bitterness; for, if he had killed Ned Black, what would his own future be? He saw himself shunned by all those he held most dear.

The laboring men tramped along behind him ; questioning him, with hurried breath, as to the accident.

“ Been fighting ! ” said one, as he heard Dick’s truthful response.

“ Tsh ! ” said the other, in a tone of pity.

When they arrived at the place, Ned Black was still lying, pale and still, in the moonlight. The men made a chair with their arms, and conveyed him to the farm-house. And while they swayed from side to side with their limp burden, stumbling as they found their way back over the fields, Dick ran hastily for the village doctor. Even in that crisis, he did not wish that he had kept to his old indolent ways and pursuits : a man clings to the possession of energy and strength as long as he is a man. He did regret forcing a fight upon Black ; for his conscience told him that he could have avoided it. The perfection of his bodily strength should have had a higher motive than merely to vanquish a mortal opponent. The thought that he had perhaps killed a man came upon him with a sickening terror. That white face lying in the moonlight would haunt him till his dying day. Even if the law spared him, he must be a wanderer — from all — from that dear girl he had known from boyhood. He remembered a sermon in which the preacher said, that the wave of sympathy which rolled

through the breast of a man who had suddenly committed a crime, for the inmates of a state-prison, had something very spiritual in it, came back to him.

Fortunately, he found the doctor in, and they drove together to the farm-house. As they descended the hill, through the dark shadows of the rows of elms, and then boomed across the narrow bridge which spanned the river, Dick related the cause of the accident. The doctor, who was a silent man, shook his head, and whipped up his horse. Although the moonlight was very beautiful, Dick felt that a dark rainy night would have been more to his mind. As they drove past the grounds of the Miltons, he saw a light shining in Miss Milton's chamber. It was soft and rosy, by contrast with the bright silver sheen on the roofs of the chateau-like mansion. It seemed to look reproachfully, over the great rounded masses of green foliage, at Dick. He recalled every look and gesture of Miss Milton. His heart was stirred with a great throb, as he felt how necessary to him had grown her commendation and sympathy, and now by one act he had put himself, perhaps, for ever out of her beautiful world of purity and high standing! When they arrived at the farm-house, they found the inmates attentive to the wounded man. Black had recovered his

consciousness, but he was a terrible-looking sight, as Dick's eye glanced eagerly at him ; for good Mrs. Dean, the farmer's wife, had covered his face with patches of brown paper soaked in water. There was an overpowering odor of camphor in the room ; and the whole stock of medicines which the house possessed were paraded upon the table. The doctor, with a look of contempt at the preparations, examined Ned's head, and, after a few minutes, informed Dick, to his great joy, that there were no bones broken ; and that Black would recover from his bruises, which, however, were very severe. Dick felt a great joy in his heart, and could not do enough for his late adversary ; who, however, accepted his attentions with an ill grace. Dick, as he went home, stopped for a moment to look at the light in Miss Milton's window, which still shone. He knew now that he loved her deeply. He thrilled with the remembrance of every smile which she had bestowed upon him, and thought over her conversations with him, and her various acts toward him, which might have various loving interpretations or not. She would know that he had vanquished Ned Black ; his late compunctions and gloomy forebodings instantly left him, and he looked up at the smiling moon, and hummed a bit of song, as he walked along, very conscious of his possession of strength and energy.

Rose, accompanied by her brother, with a terrible load upon her heart, sought her home. Bobbie, after seeing her safely in her room, ran back to conduct his father away from the party. Rose, with a shudder at the dishonor he had already brought upon his children and upon his name, sank upon her knees by her bedside. Her hair escaped from the Martha Washington cap, and rolled in a dishevelled mass over her shoulders. Her high ruff was crushed, as she tossed her head from side to side in an agony of tears. The bitter thought that Ned Black had neglected her the whole evening, and had devoted himself to Miss Milton, came up, alternately, with the remembrance of the shame her father had brought, and perhaps was still bringing, upon them. She started up, thinking that she caught the sound of his unsteady footsteps; but they were those of a villager on the street. Alas! she read it in the eyes of Black that he had ceased to love her, and was determined to free himself from his secret engagement. Indeed, his manner lately seemed to show that he did not recognize any tie between them. Should he not have escorted her to the party, even if she were going in a public capacity? Should he not have come to her during the evening, and asked her to walk or dance with him? Should he not have aided her in

her bitter distress? He had witnessed it all, and hated her! She clutched her hands, and sobbed bitterly. She started up in a moment; for she heard her father's voice, and the pathetic, manly little tones of her brother's voice, as he guided Mr. Snelve into the house. She heard another voice too. It could not be Ned Black's? She crept down the stairs, and found Graham sitting on the veranda.

"Do not be alarmed, Miss Snelve," said he, coming forward, with an air of deep sympathy. "We kept Mr. Snelve in a side apartment after you left; and, in a little while, persuaded him to return home. It was well understood that there had been a great dinner at Mr. Bandy's; and he had, inadvertently, taken too much wine."

Rose thanked him in her heart for so quickly informing her of what she wanted to know. She noticed that he did not say "your father," but "Mr. Snelve." It seemed to imply a nice feeling on his part, — to separate the blame of the father from any imputation that it involved any shame to her. It was a sweet thought to feel that she could expect keen sympathy from this man, to whom she had always gone for help in her money matters. She unburdened her heart to him in relation to her father. Graham tried to make her think that the scene at the party was not so bad as she thought. Mr. Snelve, he

thought, did not walk very unsteadily, and had behaved with his air of great courtesy. Rose thought bitterly of the hollowness of her father's high-bred ways ; but she was somewhat consoled by Graham's account. The moonlight tempted her to be confidential, and she related the long pent-up struggle which she and her brother had been through. Graham told her that he had known it for some time, and that she had his hearty sympathy. Rose wondered at the touch of feeling in the tones of his voice. Her eyes wandered over his iron-gray locks, and rested upon the well-cut features, which were clearly outlined in the moonlight. He seemed to her like an elder brother, — not so much older that she could not confide her youthful fancies to. She felt more at ease, and calmer, as she talked with him ; and, when he bade her good-night, he had the pleasure of seeing even a faint smile upon her face, which had been provoked by his account of the reception of Mrs. Snell's old-fashioned garments at the party. When he had left her alone, Rose fell again to brooding over her lover's neglect. She wished she had a mother to confide in. She sat in the window while the moonlight streamed in, and thought over all the events of the beautiful spring and early summer months. They were to have been so full of pleasure, — so bright with loving interviews and

strolls in the woods, or by the river. Instead of this, her troubles had gradually increased, and kept pace with the glory of the coming season. She would willingly die, if it were not for Bobbie.

Graham, as he walked slowly back to his solitary lodgings, was full of thought. He had noticed the increase of Ned Black's neglect of Rose from day to day. At first, the knowledge gave him a throb of delight, and renewed the hope of gaining this beautiful girl, which he thought he had thoroughly crushed. Then, as he saw evidences of Rose's deep love for the young man, and as he witnessed the paling of her cheeks from day to day, his feeling was submerged for the time in anger at Black, and he made him the subject of careful study and observation. He knew of Ned Black's false entry in the books of the bank; but he carefully kept the knowledge which he had gained to himself, wishing to test the young man still farther. His speculations in Milltown were also known to him. He stood ready to save Black for the sake of Rose. His secret love for her had changed the entire current of his thoughts. After all had come out happily for Rose, he should close his business affairs, and wander in Europe for some years. His solitary life in his room at the boarding-house would henceforth be

unendurable. After leaving Rose, he walked, to calm his tumultuous feelings, many miles over the country roads. All nature seemed to be asleep. Far down in the valley the farm-houses brooded beneath the rounded masses of foliage of the protecting elms, their roofs looking in the moonlight as if they were covered with snow. Not a light was to be seen: even that which was usually shining in the window of the sick man who lived near the cross-roads was put out. Either he had recovered, or he had died, and there was no longer any occasion for the light. Graham moodily thought, how some day he should go out of life, with a hired watcher by his bedside, a lonely old man. However, what difference did it make? Would death be any harder? Would it not be easier? He thought of his struggles for money and position. He stood ready to lend to the poorest beggar in the street, to give a moment of happiness to some one, with that which could not gain him any. The young man who marries early, and settles down to his married life before he has got into the thirties, may have many responsibilities and quick-coming cares; but he is spared such a struggle as came to Graham in the years when he had thought that his life-plans were too firmly fixed to be moved by any thing less than an earthquake. They had been changed in-

stantly by the smile of a young girl, and, as often happens to a man with one aim, had taken away the spring of his ambition, and had left him in a purposeless condition. Life seemed utterly stale and profitless, whichever way he might turn.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE.

THE news of Black's condition speedily spread abroad. It was reported that Dick and he had had a quarrel, and that the former had struck Black on the head with a stone. Immense indignation was expressed, especially among the young men. The members of the ball nine came to see their sick captain; and went away with the impression that Dick had done an underhanded thing, notwithstanding their captain's apparent desire to shield Dick. Generosity was a beautiful trait, they said to themselves, in Black; but any one could see, that, after knocking his opponent down, Dick had pummelled his face black and blue. Dick should be taught a lesson for this conduct; and there was much whispering and consulting together in various quarters. Mr. Tom Milton, on hearing of Black's state, immediately went to see him. He was sorry for the young man; and feared also for the effect of the accident on

the base-ball match, the day appointed for which was now close at hand.

"Molly," said he, on his return, "don't you ever invite Richard Softy to this house again. He has disgraced himself in my estimation, and in that of all right-feeling persons. I regard his attack upon Mr. Black as simply murderous! — simply murderous!"

"Is Mr. Black, then, so much hurt?" said his niece, with a feeling of loyalty to her old friend, Dick, welling up in her heart.

"Well, he seems to have knocked him down with a stone, and then to have pounded his face until it is hardly recognizable."

"How shocking!" exclaimed his niece.

"Shocking, indeed!" said Mr. Milton, with emphasis. "A young man who is guilty of such conduct should be avoided."

"I cannot believe it of Dick," said Miss Milton, sturdily.

"I found it hard to believe," said her uncle. "Black strives, like a generous fellow, to shield Dick; but Dick's conduct is evident enough, and there is no word to express it but 'shameful.' We must postpone our match for a week at least; and I don't know but longer. If Black and O'Callahan are knocked up, we shall have made pretty braggarts of ourselves, and shall get whipped bravely."

Miss Milton perceived that her uncle's feelings for Black and condemnation of Dick were a little warped by his eagerness to win at the coming match. And she resolved to see Dick, and learn the truth from him; for she had great faith in his honesty. She sent him, by the hands of Bobbie, a short note; asking him to meet her, at the ford of the river, the following afternoon. When Dick received the note, he was enchanted at first, and then began to think over her reasons for desiring to see him. Perhaps she wanted him to show her the path through the woods to the clearing on Sunset Hill; but why should she wish to meet him at the ford, and not at her uncle's house? He had met Mr. Milton, that morning, on the village street: he noticed that he did not return his bow; but he attributed this neglect to absence of mind on the part of the old gentleman. Could it have been intentional? Dick felt that he was in ill-favor with the ball-playing part of the community, and was ready to see Mr. Milton take their part. Whatever reason Miss Milton had for meeting him, the consciousness remained that the note was written in her dear handwriting, and that he should have an afternoon alone with her. How slowly the hours of the day glided by! He looked at his watch continually. At length the hour arrived, and he

found himself at the ford. He saw a bit of blue dress through the bushes, and his heart beat tumultuously. Then Miss Milton came in sight, looking more charmingly than he had ever seen her. She wore a Gainsborough hat, which was looped up at the side with pink roses. She was leaning in a pensive attitude against a tall maple, and looking up the river. Her piquant features were in a state of unusual solemnity. She looked up, with a sad smile, as Dick came forward.

"Have you been waiting long?" he inquired, as he greeted her.

"Only a few minutes," she answered. "I sent for you, Dick, to inquire into this sad business about Ned Black. Won't you tell me all about it? No, not here: let us go up the bank of the river, and sit over there in that grove of maples."

Dick accompanied her, in silence, to the place she pointed out. The river had taken a sudden turn at this point, and, leaving a sand-bank on one side, had washed out a deep bed beneath the little knoll, which was covered with maples. The denuded roots of a large tree projected far out over the amber-colored pools of the rippling stream; and had been fashioned by Dick, one day when he had visited the spot with his present companion, into a grotesque arm-chair.

Miss Milton seated herself in it, and pointed to his old seat at her feet.

"Now, Dick," said she, putting herself in a listening attitude, "how was it?"

"I whipped him,—that's all," said Dick, sententiously.

Miss Milton looked at him, steadily, with a look of amazement. Could he be telling the truth? Ned Black was renowned for his strength and skill.

"Did you whip him fairly?" she asked.

"It does not become you to ask a gentleman that question," said Dick, proudly, "if you mean to question whether I used fair blows."

"I was wrong, I was wrong," exclaimed Miss Milton, perceiving his look of anger. "But it is doubted, Dick," she continued; "and I want to hear the truth from your lips."

"I don't see why you should doubt me, if all the rest of the world did," said Dick, speaking thickly.

"I don't doubt you," she said, putting her hand frankly on one of his. "I only want to know how it all happened."

"Well," said Dick, "we had a quarrel. We've always quarrelled; and once he whipped me in a stand-up fight. Since that day I resolved to revenge myself. I have exercised and trained myself by all possible means. And he sought

a fight on the night of your party. I did not refuse him. We repaired to the same place where he had once whipped me: and I whipped him so that he could not see out of his eyes; giving him entire satisfaction, I imagine."

"You whipped him fairly?" exclaimed Miss Milton; "you whipped him fairly?"

"Why do you repeat that question?" said Dick, testily.

"Forgive me, Dick; but I want to know all about it."

"He was about to strike me in an underhand way," said Dick, "and I threw him; and, in falling, his head came in contact with a stone, which stunned him; but he had been thoroughly whipped before that occurrence."

"Are you his superior in boxing?" said Miss Milton, measuring Dick with her eyes, with a half-sceptical look.

"Yes," said Dick, carelessly.

"This is a very sudden change in you," said his companion.

"Well—yes. I have changed somewhat," said he, gazing with all his soul in his blue eyes straight into her face. She colored, and withdrew her hand.

"There is an impression that you used unfair means in your fight," said she. "How it arises, I don't know; but my uncle has heard it. He

has been to see Mr. Black, and has returned very indignant with you, and desires that you should not be received at our house."

"I shall not trouble him," said Dick, quickly. He saw a look of pain come over her face, and continued in a softened tone: "Why should people doubt me any more than Ned Black? If he was fair and square, he would say up and down that I whipped him: he knows that I did."

"People say that there is not a mark or bruise on your face; and Mr. Black is much bruised; and, therefore, considering his skill in boxing, they cannot account for it."

"They suppose that I knocked him down, and then jumped on him, I believe," said Dick, contemptuously. "Let them believe so, if they will."

"Mr. Black denies that you did jump upon him, or any thing of that sort," replied Miss Milton. "But people say that is his generosity: he wishes to shield you."

Dick laughed aloud, in derision. "I shall not say any thing more: I have my own opinion of Ned Black, and I leave people to theirs. I suppose you will believe in him."

"I don't know why you should make that speech," said his companion, with *hauteur*.

Dick restlessly pulled the spears of the grass nearest him, and tried to throw them far out

upon the pools of the river. His usually placid face assumed a very severe expression. Miss Milton looked at him for some time with eyes full of seeking. Finally, her sense of humor conquered her, and she burst into a merry fit of laughter.

“Forgive me, Dick ; but I can’t help it : it’s too funny for any thing. Your countenance would convict you of murder before old Justice Tooms, at Milltown.”

“You had the long countenance a’ moment ago,” said Dick, curtly.

“I ?” exclaimed his companion.

“Yes : you were the judge, condemning me without a hearing.”

“Excuse me, Dick. Ha, ha, ha ! I can’t imagine you boxing with Ned Black. You didn’t keep your dressing-gown on, did you ? or go through the wet grass with only your slippers on ?”

“I don’t know how I can convince you of my strength, except by hiring some one to come upon your lawn, and then pitching into him before you.”

“What fun it would be ! Now can’t you, Dick ?”

“Why do you always rally me thus ? Can’t you believe that I have a vein of deadly seriousness running through me ?”

"Running through you? a *vein*? Why, you are submerged in an *ocean* of seriousness to-day, Dick."

"I am deadly in earnest."

"About what, pray? another fierce encounter? From the accounts I hear of Mr. Black's face, I shall drive over to Justice Tooms, and ask him to issue a writ."

"I wish you would be serious. I am not in a mood for jesting."

"You would have us both gaze down into the depths of the river, with long countenances and deep-drawn sighs, I suppose. I haven't had a fight, you know, and can't join you. What dreadful things fights must be, to transform a light-hearted, merry fellow into a sedate old gentleman! Come, Dick, your sighs are too desperate: I'm going." Thus saying, she jumped up. As she did so, her dress caught in a branch of the root of the tree, and, in bending backward hastily to disengage it, she lost her balance, and fell into the dark pool beneath. Dick followed her instantly. The tide bore her swiftly under the bank, and threatened to wedge her in between the roots and the trunk of a tree which had been caught between the bank and a rock. Dick seized her as she was disappearing in the foaming eddies, and braced himself against the tree. Now came the test of those muscles he

had so assiduously trained. Throwing his arm over the dead tree, with the other around Miss Milton, he stayed both their flights for a moment; and then, throwing his leg over the tree-trunk, he managed by an immense exertion of muscle to draw his exhausted charge higher out of the water, and, with a fresh effort, to place her with only her limbs in the water. Then he edged himself along, drawing her after him, until he reached the rocks; and, taking his dripping burden in his arms, walked up the bank, and placed her upon the green grass.

Miss Milton had lost consciousness for a moment; but it quickly returned. She stood up and looked at Dick, and then gazed at her dripping garments.

"Well, well! I'm a pretty sight!" she exclaimed. "This was to pay me for laughing at you, Dick. I'm tempted to laugh at you this minute: you look so wretched with the water running in a stream out of your shoes. But don't I feel wretched, though? I think I won't laugh any more to-day. Dear, dear! look at my new silk; and there goes my Gainsborough, sailing down the river!"

Hardly had the words escaped her lips, before Dick started off; and, notwithstanding her protestations, swam out into the river again, and returned, after a struggle, with the hat.

"I shall never question your bravery or your strength, again," she said, in a tremulous voice, as he handed her the Gainsborough. "Truly, I didn't fall into the river to test it."

"That was evident enough," said Dick, smiling at her serious air. "Young ladies don't sacrifice new attires so recklessly. Come, you must not stand still: we must walk rapidly to the nearest house."

They were not far from Farmer Snell's residence, and Dick rapidly conducted her thither. Mrs. Snell welcomed them both with open arms; and speedily conducted Miss Milton to her own chamber, to provide her with dry garments. She would get her husband to take the young lady home, towards evening. Dick promised to call in the evening, and see if she had received no ill effects from her bath; and, refusing Mrs. Snell's offer of Sam's best go-to-meeting suit, he set off at a round pace for his room.

What might have happened if this accident had occurred in those old days when his muscles were flabby and weak! Miss Milton would certainly have perished; for it took all his acquired strength to drag her from beneath that tree, against the rush of the river. This event repaid him fully for all his endeavors; this could not be followed by any unpleasant consequences. He felt a glow of joy run through him as he ran;

and hardly dared to think that he had held the beautiful girl to his heart, as he bore her up the bank. It was late in the afternoon, and the cool airs of the evening bore to him delicious odors of ripening strawberries, mingled with that of new-mown hay. He had to cross the ball-field on the way to his room. The nine were there playing a practice-game, without Black. They had put Bobbie Snel in as centre-field, and the man who usually played in that position acted as catcher. Dick met Bobbie just as he caught a high-flyer. The boy's face was glowing with pride and enthusiasm. He stood, after returning the ball to one of the other players, stooping down with hands upon each knee, and with his face pursed up with a look of immense responsibility. As Dick accosted him pleasantly, Bobbie was troubled with a multitude of feelings. He partook of the base-ball players' feeling of indignation against Dick most heartily; for he was extremely loyal to Ned Black: on the other hand, he had always liked Dick; and he wished him to behold his skill in playing ball. His temporary promotion into the great Dornfield nine had made him, for the time, a prince of egotism. How large he saw himself loom up in the estimation of the other boys, and in that of his elder acquaintances, like Dick! His curiosity, also, was greatly excited; for he noticed the

young man's dripping state. Another high-flyer, fortunately, decided the matter for him ; he ran at a break-neck pace to secure it, and meanwhile Dick had passed beyond him. That young man noticed that the players left their positions, and advanced toward him. He stopped in his slow trot, and waited for them. Kennedy, the large, first-base man, came first.

"You are a pretty fellow," said he, "to strike a man in the head with a stone, and then pound his face to a jelly." As he said this, the other players gathered round the two in a circle.

"You make a great many assumptions, Kennedy," said Dick, nonchalantly ; and, turning his back upon him, thrust those next him away, in order to proceed.

A half dozen arms were stretched out, and he was forced back into the circle.

"Tell me up and down," said Kennedy, baring his arms : "Did you or did you not strike Black with a stone ?"

"I deny your right to address me in this manner," said Dick, looking his opponent up and down. "If I say 'no,' you will think you have intimidated me. I say, no ; now make way : I am wet through."

"I don't believe you," growled Kennedy.

Hardly had the words left his mouth, before he felt his face slapped by Dick. "You mean

to force me to fight," exclaimed the latter, " whatever I say ; and you tell me in effect that I lie."

The ring was quickly enlarged, and the two young men squared off. In a few moments it was clearly evident that Kennedy, notwithstanding his long reach, was no match for his wiry antagonist. To the astonishment of every one, he was completely whipped before the village boys had ceased to run up to the circle. The ring broke, and Dick was suffered to walk away ; for no one dared to attack him.

After the departure of her rescuer, Miss Milton, dressed in a suit of Hetty Snell's, reclined before a wood fire in the best room of the farmhouse. Mrs. Snell bustled about ; bringing her first a glass of wine, and then the yolk of an egg in brandy and sugar, and then a cup of tea. The young lady, in a half-dozing manner, gazed at the old samplers upon the low walls ; at the weeping figure of a maiden reclining beneath a willow upon a tombstone : and at the stiff Puritan visages of the Snells' ancestors, which looked fixedly at her from their old frames. Dick had murmured something as he carried her in his strong arms. It sounded like " Darling :" could it have been ? Perhaps it was " Darndest !" their condition, truly, merited such an expletive. He was certainly a brave fellow : she had been very unjust to him ; she

would not be so any more. If he had been in love with her, he would have kissed her face as it reposed upon his shoulder. If he had, wouldn't she have given it to him! He had certainly saved her life; for in a moment that tide would have swept her beneath the tree trunks. She shuddered as she thought of the dark recesses beneath the bank into which she would have been swept, and drowned, in that bright June afternoon, while the flowers nodded on the bank above, and the birds sang gaily.

"It was lucky you had Mr. Softy with you," said Mrs. Snell, coming in at that moment with some warmer tea: "he is such a strong, brave fellow."

"He did prove to be very strong and brave. I had always considered him an indolent, and rather effeminate, young man, before this accident."

"Bless you! my husband says that he has more nerve and pluck than any young fellow he knows. As for Sam, he worships Dick."

"The village people have always had my impression of him," replied Miss Milton. "How could it be that you have judged him rightly?"

"Wall, he used to come up here every week to ride our horse, Philip."

"What! that furious brute?" exclaimed Miss Milton.

"Yes: you never seed the like. Why, actilly, it made my blood run cold to see that young fellow jump on the horse's back, and go tearing across yender field. My husband wouldn't listen to his mounting of him, for a long while; but the young fellow was possessed to. They had an awful struggle at the beginning. The horse reared and snorted, and kicked up; but it was no use. There sat Mr. Softy as cool as a cucumber on his back. He has tamed him a little now; but no one else pretends to ride him. Oh! he is a brave young fellow. We think there is no one like him."

"Well, well," said Miss Milton to herself, "these young men are mysteries: I have made up my mind that a girl don't know any thing about them."

CHAPTER XII.

THE FAIR.

MILLTOWN was in full possession of all the information in regard to the Martha Washington party, before ten o'clock on the day following it. Mrs. Cramer rode over to her dear friend, Mrs. Baslee, who had been spending the winter at Washington, to gather from that lady's stock of information and to impart from her own. It was speedily reported about town that all the young men were much intoxicated, and that Miss Snel was so much overcome by repeated toasts of champagne that she had to be conveyed home. It was also reported that many people were very indignant because they were not invited ; and many of those who did go were snubbed by the literary set ; and the old costumes were failures, — only two or three people appeared in them, and they were laughed at so much that they went home early. Such was the story circulated at Milltown. It was acknowledged by all that their fair would not be such a complete *fiasco*.

The young ladies had been working assiduously for it. There were bushel-baskets full of pin-cushions made in the shape of hearts and forget-me-nots ; there were base-balls painted with the letter M in different colors ; there were prize ring-cakes made in the shape of a ball, and ornamented with bats and base-ball *insignia* in frost work ; there were pans and pans of doughnuts, cut in the shape of champion players in every attitude. The refreshments promised to be on a most lavish scale. Every one had some part in the preparations. To Miss Deming, daughter of the leading cotton manufacturer, was given the table for fancy handkerchiefs and scarfs ; to Miss Siller, the table for gloves and mittens ; Mrs. Grover, the wife of the head machinist of the machine shops, was given in charge the great tidy, worked in colors, illustrating a ball match. Her daughter, a young lady of eighteen, was to solicit people to buy shares for it. In short, every one had some prominent office, and there was great unanimity and good will.

Unfortunately, the night of the fair was rainy ; but the wisdom of holding the entertainment in a hall became all the more evident. The place they had selected was used on week-days for town meetings, and on Sundays as a place of worship by one of the religious societies. The interior was as clean as white paint could make

it ; and the tall windows were furnished with immense white curtains. Two chandeliers of a gorgeous pattern betokened at once the incoming of gas and luxury into the place. Their light brought into glaring relief the loaded tables beneath them. The young ladies who tended the tables were dressed in their best. Miss Baslee, who had just returned with her mother from Washington, wore a blue silk with a long train, with a white lace overskirt of the most elaborate description. As she walked about, the young ladies and the old held their breaths in an attitude of taking in food for reflection and criticism. Mrs. Baslee took charge of the prize cake. She was a large, fleshy woman, and sat in state in an arm-chair, clad in a rich, black silk covered with beads. She had enormous solitaire diamonds for ear-rings, and her hands were covered with rings. She waved her fingers as she had been accustomed to do when she was young and was noted for her pretty hand and arm. Her husband, a little man with gray, reddish whiskers, was a very prosperous woollen manufacturer. He stood beside her.

“Mrs. Baslee, we are delighted to see you back,” said the agent of the Duck Mills, Mr. Smith, dropping the arm of Mrs. Smith, and taking the opportunity to pull up his dicky.

“Milltown hasn’t seemed nateral while you

were away," joined in Mrs. Smith. "You had a real good time, didn't you?"

"S'pose you called on the President," said Mr. Smith, "and gave him our respects." Mr. Smith smiled suddenly, and looked around to see if any one else had heard the joke.

"Yes, we saw him several times," replied Mrs. Baslee. "Senator Baslee, you know, is a cousin of my husband; so we had the *entrée*, and saw a great deal of Washington society."

"She goes everywhere, sees every thing, and has all that's going," sighed Mrs. Smith, as she was forced away from Mrs. Baslee by the crowd who also desired to pay their respects to that lady.

"Wall," said Mr. Smith, "he has made lots of money, and can afford it: they say he is worth a million. There's Mr. Gowen talking to him. They say Gowen is worth five hundred thousand dollars."

"I don't like to have you only agent of them mills, John," said his wife. "We have got just as good right to be rich as Mr. Baslee or Mr. Gowen; haven't we?"

"We will be," said her husband, in a self-satisfied whisper. "I've a little spec in hand."

"It's astounding how the women dress now-a-days," grumbled old Justice Tooms, in his seat near the wall, to his cronies, Squire Jones and

Squire Brown. "The times are going to change. Everybody isn't going to make money right and left. When you are on the top wave, get ready to plump into the trough of the sea. Aint that so?" Thus saying, he took a pinch of snuff, and looked up with an expression of mingled agony and delight, which was interpreted by Miss Grover, who passed by at that moment, to mean that he was anxious to take a share in the tidy.

"Now that gal," said the justice, after he had growlingly refused, "see how her father and mother have dressed her up. Sorter pretty, too. Grover is a head machinist, and gets fair wages; but his wife must keep two gals, and dress her daughter up in silk and satin, and not let her do a stroke of work, give her lessons on the piano, and have a French master. It's only a specimen of the times. I tell you, there's going to be a change. Look at Mrs. Baslee and daughter; there's another example. Baslee, they say, has made lots of money. But the time will come when there will be a shrinkage of values."

"That's what I tell 'em," said Squire Jones, who had been too cautious to make any money. "There's going to be a crash."

Squire Brown, who never made an observation, but always assented to prophecies of cataclysms, said, "That's so."

The hall by this time was full of people, and presented a splendid scene (in the language of the Milltown papers). The long refreshment tables were resorted to by a crowd of old and young. The young lady waiters, clad in their most modern styles, and presenting a great contrast to the simple attire of the attendants at the Martha Washington tea-party, answered the young baseball men in fancy neck-ties, who inquired the price of doughnuts, in their sweetest tones ; helping them with one hand, and cuffing the ears of obstreperous youngsters with the other. The shells of peanuts began to grate under one's shoes. The post-office in the corner of the hall was surrounded by an eager crowd. The tall clown of the village sat by himself, far in a corner, scribbling epistles to different people, and chuckling to himself at his witticisms, following the motions of his pen with his tongue.

“ This is a great success,” said Mr. Myers, the popular minister,—a tall young man, dressed in black sack-coat and a colored necktie,—addressing Mrs. Devons, the wife of his deacon.

“ Guess we shall realize handsome,” said that lady, rapidly twisting up a bag of pop-corn, and handing it to a youngster. “ Have you hearn, Mr. Myers, how they get on with their trouble over ter the Brown church ? ”

“ Their trouble about turning round to face

the singers? Well, they are pretty equally divided over there, I guess. John Billings says their side consider it impertinent to turn round and face the singers when the hymns are sung. They are all very set about it; but he says he is going over to the other side. He don't see, when a fellow is doing his best up there in the choir, why he shouldn't have some one look at him, especially when that fellow is a pretty young lady."

Mrs. Devons's grim mouth, which had grown more firmly defined than usual in guarding her colored pop-corn from youthful depredators, suddenly relaxed into a smile in response to that of the minister, and as quickly resumed its more natural look of sternness.

"They air a stinging swarm over thar," she remarked: "it will take 'em a long time to settle."

"How air ye?" said Mr. Bolder, the dashing young head of Bolder & Co., the flourishing narrow-fabric manufacturers. "I want to congratulate you on your last sermon. It was first-rate, went right to the spot; kind of sermon I like to hear; sermon for the times; of the liberal kind,—full of science. I tell you what, science is the thing now-a-days, aint it? Well, now, 'tis no mistake, the old theology has got to give way. The world has got to advance: there's no

stopping it. Ruts aint for us here in Milltown. We are progressive. Let 'em cling to the past in such dead places as Dornfield, if they want to. And then look at the contrast of the two towns. Why, they haven't grown a mite in Dornfield since they had ter the times the Indians gave 'em such a scare. Oh, I tell ye! science is the thing, and it's going to win this next game. You see, the reason we lost that last game was, there warn't a man in our nine fit to play: they'd jist been down to the city to play the Harvards. Our men have got a kink or two. Science, you know." Thus saying, Mr. Bolder twisted his black moustache, and began to flirt with Miss Grover, who was still soliciting for the tidy.

" You think we shall win the next game," said the preacher. " Hope we shall. This base-ball enthusiasm is a good thing. It keeps the young men in good physical condition, and substitutes out-of-door exercise for in-door dissipation. I should like to play in a game myself."

" Would you, really? — Now, what do you s'pose a gentleman wants of a tidy, hey? — Now, Mr. Myers, I like to look on at a ball-game; but I have too much regard for my fingers to play. — Take it for my prospective wife, hey? are they going to put you up at shares, hey? "

" She's snappy, I tell you," exclaimed Bolder,

with a laugh, as the young girl made a flippant remark, and ran away.

“To tell you the truth, Mr. Myers,—and I wouldn’t tell any minister but you,—I’ve got some heavy bets on that game.”

“Betting is a bad thing,” said Mr. Myers, tapping him on the shoulder, playfully.

“If I had time, I’d argue the point with you,” said Bolder, waving his fingers in the air as if to bid adieu, and elbowing his way through the crowd to greet Mrs. Baslee. The minister greeted his folk warmly, right and left. He was speedily surrounded by smiling ladies, who solicited him to buy various articles. He had a good word for everybody. His face seemed to glow with the consciousness that he preached and acted out the doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man.

“We’ve got a prize in our minister,” said Mr. Grover, as he sat in the corner, resplendent in a very white shirt, with a small gold model of a steam-engine for a bosom pin.

“No mistake in that,” replied Moses Cutter, the postmaster. “He is a live man: preaches about the events of the day. Nothing of the old Puritan about him. Likes a good-going horse;—who don’t? What a contrast he is to minister Denham, at Dornfield! Why, he won’t even let his parishioners dance, and is continually preaching against the times.”

"What can you expect in Dornfield," replied Abraham Low, keeper of the largest West India goods store in Milltown. "Why, they are a hundred years behind the age over there. They say, however, they have made up their minds to beat us in this next ball-game. Old Tom Milton has got his back up; and when he does, you know, people have to stand round."

"Tom Milton," said Mr. Grover, "has had his day. He used to rule in business with an iron hand; but he belongs to the old school. We've got lots of men in our town who can beat him in energy and dash. And they have made up their minds to do it, too. Business is dull just now, and we are all ready for some excitement. Bas-lee and Bolder and Stetlow and Davis have all got heavy bets on the result, it is said. Oh! our boys are bound to win."

In one corner of the hall a space had been curtained off; and a large sign, containing the inscription "Fish Pond," had been erected. A young lady sat ensconced within the space, and tied on parcels to the end of the fishing-lines, which were flung over the top of the enclosure, the sportsmen paying five cents for each throw. This booth was surrounded by a hilarious crowd of youngsters. Ranged near it were many grab-baskets, in which people sought their luck. There were, besides, mild lottery schemes in

abundance. Squire Brown had put up his Alderney calf, in shares of fifty cents each ; the tidy shares were ten cents ; and a piece of cotton goods, contributed to the cause by Mrs. Baslee, went at five cents a share. The noise in the room presently became deafening. The lights burned dimly in the atmosphere of dust created by the hilarious boys, who ran in and out of the crowded groups, to the intense discomfort of every one except the minister, who thought the children were entitled to a good time always. The men gradually accumulated at one end of the room, to talk over the proposed nomination of Mr. Baslee for Congress. That gentleman made himself very agreeable to every one, and took great pains to help to refreshments some bashful Irish laborers, who hugged the wall near the entrance to the hall.

Presently the minister, Mr. Myers, mounted the platform, with a paper in his hand.

“Fellow-citizens,” said he, enjoining silence, “it is evident to every one that our fair in behalf of our glorious nine has been a great success. We owe it to the exertions of the ladies. Three cheers for the ladies !” (They were given with a will.) “The ladies are always prominent in all good works. We owe it to the munificence of men whom it is not necessary to name ; one of whom has just given a complete new uniform to

the club, and two signal-flags of crimson silk, which, I trust, will be seen in the front ranks of battle, leading on to victory." (Immense applause.) "I will now inform you, that the piece of cotton goods has fallen to the lot of Miss Grover. Now is the chance for that young man of the future." (Great laughter.) "The tidy has been won by John Timmins, by whose hands it will maintain its name, and be handed down to future generations." (Great laughter and giggling: John Timmins was noted for his slouchy appearance.) "The cake has been cut, fellow-citizens, and the ring has fallen to Miss Baslee." (Great applause.) "The young man is on his way from Washington. And I, ladies and gentlemen, — I, your humble fellow-servant, diligent in all good works as I have always tried to be, — I have won the *calf*." The applause and laughter became deafening, as the minister descended, and mingled again in the swaying crowd.

While Stetlow, Bolder, and other young business men stood at the door of the hall, preparing to leave, a base-ball man came in hurriedly, and said that there was a report that Ned Black had been killed. Stetlow turned pale with apprehension. The men hastily interrogated the bringer of the report.

"He had a fight with Dick Softy," said Cham-

bers, the ball-man ; "and it is said Dick struck him in the head with a stone, after he found he couldn't whip him."

"I s'pose the game is up, and all bets are off," said Bolder.

"No?" replied Stetlow, emphatically. "There are bets of Milltown against Dornfield,— the best nines that the two towns can bring forward. This accident, or death, makes us all the surer."

The news spread through the hall with lightning rapidity, and was the main topic of conversation of the crowd, as it broke up and dispersed.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEFORE AND AFTER.

WHEN Dick reached his room, after his encounter with Kennedy on the green, he found himself very stiff and lame; but he dressed himself with more than his usual care, in order to call on Miss Milton later in the evening, to see if she had suffered from her accident. When he was about to set out, a servant handed him a note. It ran thus:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I suffer no ill effects from my involuntary bath, from which you so bravely rescued me. I want to see you some time soon; but not just now: perhaps next week. Sincerely,

“MARY MILTON.”

Dick did not know what to make of the note. She had always addressed him before as Dick; and now it was, “my dear friend.” Did she mean to be more formal with him in future? or had this term “friend” a warmer meaning? Why should she wish to postpone his call until

next week? Then, too, there were only four lines to the note. The ending too, "Sincerely, Mary Milton," seemed very stiff and formal. Events often transport us far beyond the customary language of intercourse; and Miss Milton's note seemed frigid to the last degree to Dick. Again he was plunged into a fit of despair. His gymnastics seemed to have a tinge of bitterness in their triumphs.

Ned Black was confined to his room for several days. His injuries were quickly healed; but his pride prevented his showing himself with his bruised face. Attentions were showered upon him. Mr. Milton sent his man-servant, twice every day, to inquire about him, and to convey him delicacies. The base-ball men spent half their time lounging in his room, and there was a constant train of the towns-people at the door. Bobbie Snelvel bore letters from Rose, filled with the most tender expressions. The young girl's affection was at full tide. Her lover was sick, and she could not go to him. Her only solace was to send him a sweet little note, every few hours, by Bobbie. Her brother, also, watched over the sick captain with the devotion of a squire to a knight. He looked up at the doctor with a touching, appealing face, whenever he met him coming from his professional visit to the bruised man; and manifested his boyish

affection by running errands at all hours. Ned Black felt dreadfully bored by Rose's tumultuous affection. He skipped the affectionate parts of the notes, at first; and presently tossed them all aside, unread: for there was nothing but affection in them. Whenever he saw Rose, he was taken captive anew by her beauty, and left her in an affectionate frame of mind; but when absence had dulled his remembrance of her, he berated his folly in falling in love with a girl who was poor, and had a dissipated "old stick" for a father. Miss Milton grew more attractive to him every day. She was evidently attracted towards him: why should he not, therefore, break off his engagement with Rose? No one knew of it. It had been entered into lightly, and had given him precious little peace or happiness. As for Rose, she might take it hard for a time; but she would get over it. Yes, she would get over it. Why should he hesitate? He gathered her letters together into a package, and put them in a corner of his trunk,—for neatness, or for a possible decision.

One evening, before going to the Miltons to tea,—the first invitation he had accepted since his accident,—he dressed himself with the utmost care. He had a strikingly handsome figure, and his evening dress set it off to perfection. The bruises were still very marked; but

they gave a decidedly interesting look to his manly face. He took out a photograph of Rose after he had finished dressing, and gazed at it as he smoked a cigarette. Yes, their intercourse had been decidedly romantic: there must be something devilish attractive in him to have awakened such affection in this reserved girl's breast. She was a harder girl to win, apparently, than Miss Milton. It would be hard to give Rose up; but what was the use of trifling? He must put an end to his doubting mood. Fortunately, he should not suffer much, and he didn't believe that Rose would: time would make it all right. These young girls, after all, were not capable of the deep devotion of mature women. Rose would have lots of chances yet. He would have been very jealous if there had been a rival for her affections: it would have been harder to break the engagement. He put the photograph in the package of letters; and sitting down at a table, holding his cigarette between the first and second fingers of one hand, wrote the following note with the other:—

“DEAR ROSE,—I desire that our engagement should be broken. I see no prospect of our marriage; for I am poor. I return your letters, and hope that we shall continue friends.

“Very truly,
“EDWARD BLACK.”

It was a hard thing to do. It took him a half hour to write the note: it was more than a half hour by his watch. He sighed, and wished he had never got into the thing, and lit another cigarette. Bobbie was coming at seven, and he would take the package and the note to his sister. Seven o'clock sounded, and Bobbie came dancing in to tell of his success as a temporary player on the nine. He had caught every ball: "hadn't muffed once."

"Dick Softy had a fight with Kennedy. The fellers crowded round 'em so I couldn't see; but they said Kennedy was up on his boxing. I tell you, aint the fellers mad with Dick?"

"Had a fight with Kennedy, had he? He will have to be taken down one of these days. Bobbie, here is a package I wish you would give your sister."

"I tried to catch like you," said Bobbie; "and I hit the balls down into grounders, just as you do, so as the fellers wouldn't catch me out. Course, I couldn't do it as you do,—no one can. Your face is looking better, isn't it? So glad. Rose will be glad too."

"Tell her—yes, tell her I'm all right now," said Black, turning his back upon the boy. "By the by, take back this copy of 'Lady of the Lake.'"

"She won't want it. We've got another."

"Well, I shan't have an opportunity to read it, tell her. Good-night."

"Good-night," echoed from the sturdy little fellow, as he ran out of the house, with his arms full of his sister's tenderest expressions of love and devotion. Black could hear his joyous "Yodel" as he ran. The man had chosen a fit messenger for his note, truly!

Bobbie found his sister waiting for him at the gate, beneath the lilacs. She looked beautifully, dressed in a white silk with blue stripes, with a pink rose in her hair. Her head was surrounded by the halo which the sun made in shining through the brown hairs which the evening breeze lifted. Bobbie jumped up, and flung his arms about her neck in a boisterous manner.

"They made me one of the nine!" he exclaimed. "I was centre-field, and the fellers said I played beautifully. Wasn't it nice?"

"It was a great triumph truly, Bobbie. Now, Bobbie, you mustn't: you will rumple my nice silk. Have you got any thing for me?"

"I got lots this time, and Ned Black is looking first-rate. He told me to tell you that he was all right now."

"What a nice brother you are!" she exclaimed, taking his packages. Her heart felt light as a bird; for her father had been unusually kind that day, and had called her the prettiest and dainti-

est Snel of the generation. She reserved the note until she was in the quietness of her room, and ran down the garden-walk with Bobbie, singing merrily. When she reached the veranda, she heard the garden-gate open ; and, looking back, saw Mr. Graham. She received him very cordially upon the steps. He had merely come to tell her that he had found a new servant girl for her, and then took his departure, with a grave bow.

“ What a kind friend he is to me ! ” said Rose. “ He is always thinking of some way to assist me. If I were in misfortune, I would go to him sooner than any one except Ned ; except Ned, of course, — dear Ned ! ” Thus saying, she ran up to her room.

“ So you think you will be ready to play next Saturday, do you ? ” said Mr. Tom Milton to Ned Black, at the tea-table. “ You won’t be taking any risks, will you ? Let me see. To-day is Tuesday. All the men are in good trim. O’Callahan is all right ; came to see me to-day, sprig as a cockerel. Now, Mr. Grandhurst, you will be glad you stayed over. We shall show you a real American game. You’ve never seen a complete game.”

“ I expect to be much edified by this game of rounders,” said Grandhurst, smiling blandly,

while the lights shone on his eye-glasses, giving his face a very refined blank look.

"But it isn't rounders, as you term the game," said Miss Milton. "You Englishmen never can be made to drop that idea. You will persist that it is rounders."

"You also persist, with equal pertinacity, in calling me an Englishman," said Grandhurst, with a little tone of asperity.

"I should take you for an Englishman anywhere," said Ned Black.

"Should you, now? Really, I don't know whether to feel complimented or not."

"You see we have been *roughing*—that's the word, isn't it, Molly?—Mr. Grandhurst on his foreign ways. We think we have got things in this country just as good as there are anywhere, especially good ball-players. I'm not speaking of any one in particular," said the old gentleman, with a merry twinkle of his eye at Black.

"I'm gradually 'giving in,' as the expression is," said Grandhurst, gazing at Miss Milton. The latter looked up suddenly at him, and then dropped her eyes as she met his look. Ned Black noticed the by-play. Could he have a rival in this exquisite?

"I thought we should bring you round," said Mr. Milton, heartily. "The fact is, we want

some real hearty, enthusiastic lovers of their country now-a-days. There's lots of talk about a limited monarchy being better than our republic; about England being better governed than this country; about corruption at the polls, and all that: but I don't believe it. We talk about every thing in this country. All the scandalous doings at Washington by the government officials are published far and wide. Now, abroad they keep these things quieter. Just as much going on there,— just as much as there is here. We are a new people, and must expect to work our way. I think we are getting on splendidly."

"If the men of education would only take an interest in politics," said Grandhurst, "there would be more hope."

"Bless you! they've got an equal chance with the rest. You are a man of education. You've come home, enlightened by travel, to take part in our glorious struggle for a republic that shall be an example for the world."

"If there wasn't such a rascally set in politics. A gentleman must have some self-respect, you know."

"Oh! he is going to take a law-office in Milltown, uncle," said Miss Milton, "and run for Congress, one of these days."

"Pretty sharp lot over there,— unscrupulous set, I'm sorry to say. Glad there aint many

towns like it," replied Mr. Tom Milton, rising, and leading the way to the parlor. On the way he asked Ned Black to step into the library with him, to talk over the coming match for a moment, and left Grandhurst alone with Miss Milton. That young gentleman had lingered at the Miltons' for many days, as their guest. He found Dornfield an idyllic retreat in this unfinished America,—very like an English town, in fact. He was alternately fascinated and repelled by Miss Milton. Every day she shocked him by some excess of demonstration or feeling ; and then he walked over to the Silvers', and partook of the rarefied atmosphere of their household, read the "Spectator," and talked about Browning's "Ring and the Book," and "Middlemarch," and sometimes went sketching with Miss Gould. He came back to Miss Milton's society to get a touch of the "emotional," as he termed it, and was again repelled to the Silvers'. So it had been during his entire stay. On the whole, however, he began to think there was something in this volcanic enthusiasm. It was interesting to study. Miss Milton had much in her that was admirable ; he began to think of the possibility of his losing his heart. Miss Milton, in turn, studied him intently.

"The hero's face is pretty well battered and bruised," said Grandhurst, as they sat down opposite each other near the window.

“It is,” replied his companion, briefly.

“It was a scandalous thing for Dick Softy to do,” said Grandhurst.

“Do what?”

“Why, hit Mr. Black on the head with a stone, and pound him when he was down. That sort of thing, you know, isn’t permitted in a civilized country.”

“It was all right, then; for you think we are uncivilized. That is logical, isn’t it?

“Things are permitted in barbarous countries which are not right, you know.”

“True; but I don’t believe Mr. Softy would do such a thing. Indeed, Mr. Black says he struck his head against a stone in wrestling.”

“He is a generous fellow. By Jove! he is the picture of an English fellow I know in Paris, — the best boxer and fencer I ever saw.”

“You think, then, that he exculpates Mr. Softy out of generosity?”

“That is the general impression,” said Grandhurst. “That little Dick Softy could never have whipped this superb-looking fellow.”

Miss Milton was silent: it looked very improbable to her also. She thought of Dick’s gallantry in rescuing her: could it be possible that he, nevertheless, was capable of a dastardly act? As she looked at Ned Black, she felt a certain tender thrill of sympathy run through

her. His eyes looked at her in such a pleading way. Even Grandhurst, for once, had used an extravagant adjective, and saw fit to call him a "superb-looking fellow." When Black came out of the library with her uncle, she had a long conversation with him, while Mr. Milton and Grandhurst talked politics. It was not possible that Dick could have whipped this man by fair means. His anger must have run away with him. Her heart warmed towards Dick even as she doubted him, as she remembered her accident and the story Mrs. Snell told her of his riding the untamed horse; but if he was capable of a dastardly attack on another man, his superior in strength, she would have nothing further to do with him. She had kept her accident a secret from her uncle, hoping that his wrath at Dick would soon subside; and she had therefore written her note to keep Dick away for a few days. She was glad now that she had been so politic; for she felt her own wrath rising against him. Ned Black went home, late that night, with the consciousness that she was not indifferent to him. He had caught an admiring look several times in her eyes; and, as for the old gentleman, he was very demonstrative in his liking. His heart sank a moment when he reflected that he had given bonds, so to speak, to Stetlow to lose this game in which Mr. Milton

was so much interested. But, after all, it wouldn't make much difference to the rich man if they won or not. They could made a good fight. If they lost, they only forfeited a small share of reputation ; and, with the money which he should gain, he should be immediately lifted out of his money difficulties, and the way to Miss Milton's heart would be straight and clear. When he retired to rest, he was troubled with some compunctions about Rose. He wondered how she took it. He would miss seeing her. Some old recollections of the love that he had killed throbbed within him, and then went out with the candle.

CHAPTER XIV.

PROTECTING ARMS.

NIIGHT is the time for anguish. Then the tears melt into the darkness, and seem to make a part of it: they do not obtrude themselves on one, and shame one into calmness. Morning dries up the weeping eyes: it is written, that "Joy cometh in the morning." The time is often deferred. There is an anguish which awakes with a quick leap from a temporary exhaustion which has favored a short sleep, and makes the beautiful coming day seem like the conflagration of the entire world. Rose sat up in bed (she had not undressed), and looked out of the glimmering window. There was a glow in the West. One little bird chirped in the dark elm. He was too early; he was unanswered; and he fell to sleep again, with his head under his wing, dreaming of meadows bright with daisies and buttercups, and bright green copses along the brook. Three crows flew over, and settled in the sedges of some distant pond. The cock-

erels sleepily answered each other from farm-house to farm-house. Then the heavens flushed more and more; and, like a chorus suddenly upbidden by a master's *bâton*, the birds sang in the orchard down the lane with a ring that had the quality of a dying-out peal of bells. The fresh air rolled into the open window, laden with the fragrance of the grape-vine flower, which it had caught on the old wall above the mill. The quick bark of a dog sounded in a distant field: he had driven a chipmonk into his retreat, and stood, with paws wet from the dew in the clover, barking, and sniffing the strength-giving morning air. These scattered notes Rose heard. Some day they would make a sad little symphony in her memory of this time. She buried her face in the pillow, and cried afresh, as it all came upon her. She had not truly realized how much of her life was wrapped up in her lover. If her life had seemed unsatisfactory in any respect, this love had filled the *lacuna*. Now all seemed unsatisfactory, and there was no love. The morning grew more splendid. A red sunbeam flickered on her chamber wall. Human voices began to be heard mingling with the sounds of birds and animals. The mowers went by, on their way to the clover-fields. The boy with the cattle ran down the lane, and shouted to the stray cow which lingered to crop the grass be-

neath her chamber window. Alas ! only yesterday morning Rose had flung open the blinds of both windows, and had sung merrily to the morn.

Mr. Snelvel sent Bobbie up to call his sister. She ought to know that he had an early engagement with Mr. Bandy : he had told her of it a hundred times the previous evening. Bobbie returned after what seemed to his father an unusual delay : his face was very long, and looked troubled.

“ She feels a little unwell, and hopes you will excuse her, this morning,” said he. “ She would like to sleep longer.”

“ My wishes and my children’s always seem to be at variance,” grumbled Mr. Snelvel. “ Why it should be, I don’t know ; but it is so. I will go and see if she is going to be sick ; I suppose she is. We shall be in a devilish fix if she is, with a new girl coming. Heigh ho ! I’m going to break up this *ménage*. There’s too much pantry about this business. I ’ll have a suite of rooms in the city.” Thus saying, he went to Rose’s door, and knocked.

“ Rose ! ” no answer.

“ Rose, why don’t you speak ? ”

“ What is it, father ? ”

“ Are you sick ? ”

“ No, only more tired than usual. I shall be all right in a little while.”

"She is well enough," remarked her father to himself, descending the stairs. "She's got a Snelvel fit on her. There is no moving her, I perceive by the tone of her voice."

"No ball-playing to-day, Bobbie. You must stay at home and see to your sister. Tell her I shall be at home in the evening." Thus saying, he brushed himself with the utmost care, selected a fresh rose-bud for his button-hole, and set out for Mr. Bandy's. Bobbie suffered a great disappointment; for he had promised to be on the ball-field punctually at nine, to practise again with the nine. He had dreamed of the event all night, and had been up very early fixing the lacings of his shoes. He walked discontentedly about for an hour; and then, becoming alarmed for Rose, went to her room. Rose answered his knock in a faint voice, and he entered her chamber. The little fellow was shocked at the sight of her pale, woe-stricken face; and put his arms round her, in the utmost apprehension, entreating her to tell him what was the matter. Rose longed for sympathy.

"Oh, Bobbie! I believe my heart will break. Ned doesn't want to know us any more." Thus saying, she thrust the crumpled note into his hand. Bobbie read it with dismay and indignation. His love for his sister and pride for his base-ball leader struggled together.

"We don't want to know him. He is a mean fellow. If I were a man I should whip him. I'll get Dick Softy to do it again for me."

"Bobbie, don't you say a word about this," cried his sister, with sudden energy. She controlled herself until she could persuade her brother to go downstairs and do some necessary errands, and then sank again upon the floor.

The day wore away slowly. With an effort, she dressed for dinner, and afterwards had an interview with the new girl. Bobbie, somewhat reassured, went out to witness a ball-play at Milltown; and she retired again to her room. At tea-time Mr. Snevel returned from Mr. Bandy's. He was much intoxicated, and some of the neighbors had to assist him to enter the house. Rose stood, with her hand upon her palpitating heart, at the landing of the stairs. She heard the tones of Mr. Graham's voice. He told Bobbie, in a loud voice, in order that Rose might hear, that he was going to have a smoke with his father in the library, and that both had been to tea. Rose heard a smothered remonstrance from her father, and then ran to her room, double-locked it, and fell in a swoon. When she came to herself, it was dark. Her head felt strangely confused. She had had a vision of her mother, stretching out her arms to her, and calling "Rose," in a voice that thrilled

her with its tones of affection. When she felt that she was alone in the room she shuddered, and moved her hands before her face, as if waving away the dread images which presented themselves to her. At length she started up, and, opening her door noiselessly, crept down the staircase, and went out into the night. The old moon swung up above the meadow, looking like the remnant of an expiring fire balloon. The mists along the course of the river slowly mounted ; wreathing themselves into human-like, floating figures, which the weird moonlight crested with faint crescents of light. Rose seemed to see her mother among the misty forms, beckoning to her again. She wandered down to the banks of the river ; falling now and then with a dull concussion over mounds, and startling the sleeping ground-sparrow from his nest. She felt that her head was strangely light. She clutched at the clumps of bushes, as she crept along, to steady herself. The fire-flies drew quick threads of light through the dark coves ; the frogs piped incessantly in the fen ; the water was dark, and full of crawling things : but life was darker, and the reach of coming days seemed illumined by no sunbeams. There were angels over there. Her mother was calling “Rose! Rose!” With a shriek, she sprang into the river towards the mists. In the cold,

benumbing water, in dreadful awakening consciousness, she felt herself seized by a strong man's hand. Graham's voice sounded in her ears. What he said she did not know: she found herself borne in his arms up the bank. She struggled, and he put her upon her feet.

"Come," said he, "you must hurry home, and get off these wet clothes."

"Home!" cried Rose, with a shudder. "I have no home. Oh! why did you save me? I heard my mother calling."

"Rose,—Miss Snel,—I must carry you, if you cannot walk."

"I will come," said she, hurriedly, shrinking from his arms; "I will come, and you will be my friend, won't you, and save me—and save me from these horrible fancies?" She spoke huskily; walking close to him again, as if for protection, as they hurried along.

"I have always been your friend, and shall always strive to protect you from harm, Rose,—Miss Snel," he said with effort.

"I have no one to confide in,—no one to counsel me," exclaimed Rose, sinking exhausted by the wayside.

"I will be your counsellor. Can you not confide in me? Do not sit down in your wet clothes. We must hurry."

"Where are you taking me to?" said Rose, looking round in a confused manner.

"I am taking you to Farmer Snell's," he replied, in a determined way. "You can have the proper care there quicker than at your own home."

"No! Oh, no!" cried Rose, shrinking back.

"They will think that you missed your foot-step as I was conducting you across the stepping-stones. Come, we must not delay. Dear Rose," he said, in a trembling voice, full of affection, "confide in me. I will bring every thing all right."

Rose suddenly clung to his arm, as if to protect herself from her own thoughts. "He has broken his engagement," she cried, in a heart-broken voice; "it is all over; why should I live?"

"He is a scoundrel!" replied Graham, supporting her. "Rose, you are well rid of him. He has stolen money from the bank. He is deeply in debt. Think of this, Rose. I have longed to warn you; but I couldn't make you broken-hearted."

"Oh, save him, if he has done wrong! Do not have him arrested!" cried Rose. "He has broken my heart; but do not let him suffer!"

Graham smiled grimly, and said: "Leave him to me, Rose. Your wishes shall always be law to me. There are bright days in store for you yet. Remember that you are suffering mentally

to-night, and that in the morning all the mists will clear away."

His companion sobbed at long intervals, as he hurried her towards the farm-house. Every sob hurt him as if he had been stabbed.

Mrs. Snell was astonished, as Rose came dripping into the house. "Well, I never! Seems to me that river is getting to be drefful dangerous. Off the stones, hey? Miss Milton had a nar-rerer escape than yourn: came near being drownded down by the maples. I shall be afraid to have Sam and Hetty meander there in future."

She bustled about, and promised Graham to take the utmost care of Rose. Before going back to the Snelvel mansion to inform Bobbie of his sister's whereabouts, he looked at Rose narrowly. She smiled faintly, and gave him her hand. The gesture seemed to say, "Do not fear." He pressed it warmly, and quickly disappeared. He cautiously called up Bobbie, informed him of his sister's whereabouts, and asked him to watch by her door during the night; telling him that she might be dangerously sick. In that case, he told him to come for him instantly.

After he had seen Rose in her own home, he walked backward and forward before her house, many hours in the night, listening anxiously at every sound. All seemed quiet; and, towards

morning, he went back to his room. How strangely the event of the night had met and rebutted the morbid fancies of his own brain! He had wandered along the river; struggling with his own hopeless love, and thinking of the uselessness of life, and the weary waste of years before him. It often happens that the desperate acts of others wake us to the realization of the dangerous trains of thought which we have been indulging in. He made frequent visits to Rose during the following day. She was moving about the house, instructing the new servant, and superintending the household affairs, with a calm, impassive look upon her countenance. Tears came to Graham's eyes as he gazed at her. She saw them, and smiled faintly; coming to him and putting both her hands in his: but no tears stood in her eyes, which were surrounded by large, dark circles.

Graham walked incessantly during the day, striving to quell his apprehensions. He met Ned Black, but averted his face. He was afraid of the wrath which threatened to burst forth and strike the young man dead before him. Once he met him riding in a basket-wagon with Miss Milton; he turned aside into a side street until they had passed. He called for the last time to see Rose, about nine o'clock, and learned that she had retired. She left word with Bobbie to

tell him that she was better, and should sleep. Graham went home, feeling a sweet calm come over his spirits. She had begun to confide in him, and to lean upon him. Perhaps he might be contented to be a very dear friend to her,—an elder brother. So he went to sleep, thinking that he had contented himself with this hope; while it was only the larger one that made the lesser hope endurable. At midnight, he dreamed that he heard Rose shrieking to him for help. The dream was so vivid that he started up in bed. He certainly heard her voice, calling in low tones to him. He hastily dressed, and ran downstairs, and out into the garden. He saw a figure at the gate: it was Rose. She held out her arms to him, and whispered, in a shuddering voice, "Save me!" He took her hands in his; they were icy cold; and the same look was upon her face that it bore when he took her from the water. She told him, in a terror-stricken voice, that she had been tempted again to throw herself into the river, and had found herself calling to him for help against her own thoughts. Graham stroked her trembling head, and made her walk up and down in the solitary lane near her house, supporting her with his arm; hoping to calm her nerves by physical exertion. She obeyed him implicitly, and walked; clinging to him, occasionally, with a shudder. Presently the

reaction came, and she sank into a seat, exhausted. Graham told her to seek her room, and promised to watch outside. She left him, giving him a look of confidence that warmed the man through his lonely vigil, and brought back hope trembling to his heart. The stars that had looked so coldly at him in the nights he had walked in misery now seemed nearer, and had a kindly twinkle. The poetic instinct overwhelmed him. At that moment he could write grand lyrical poems. He felt that love and confidence were worth giving one's life for. He felt, reverently, that he understood his Saviour's life better now. What was life worth without love? He gazed up at her window, and let the night wind cool his brow.

At early dawn Bobbie came out, and said that his sister had a fever, and wished for a doctor. Graham's heart again sank within him, and he went hastily for the physician, and busied himself in finding a nurse.

While Graham's soul was thus stirred to the depths, Dick Softy was also undergoing tribulation. He saw Miss Milton much in the company of his rival. She seemed to greet him very coldly. He did not propose to call upon her again, without a special invitation. The invitation did not come; and he grew more proud and wretched. The village people, too, turned a cold shoulder upon him. His guardian, Mr. Denham the min-

ister, read him a long lecture upon the sin of quarrelling and fighting with a fellow-being. All the young men cut him. He half resolved to go to Europe to study, and looked up the advertisements of the steamers. Mr. Denham felt that a crisis had come in his pastorship in the village: during the progress of this ball excitement he had noticed an increase of idleness; a falling off in the attendance on the Friday evening meetings, on the part of the young men; an indulgence in slang phrases, and, possibly also, in those of a more-to-be-condemned nature. He feared that beer-drinking was also on the increase; and quarrels of a desperate nature had already taken place. He wrote a sermon for the following Sunday on the evils of ball-playing. He considered it his duty, also, to call upon Mr. Milton, and protest against his influence in breaking down the old sacred bulwarks which the Puritans fathers had so carefully erected in Dornfield. When he went to Mr. Milton's house, on his parochial visit, he was told that Mr. Milton was trying his billiard-table with Mr. Grandhurst.

“Billiard-table!” exclaimed the preacher. “It is enough: I will not see him to-day;” and he turned his back upon the servant.

“It has come to this at last,” he said to himself, as he walked homeward, and gazed down at

the peaceful village below him. "I have fought a good fight in this land ; but ye Milltownites ! ye threaten to corrupt our youth, and lead them away from the faith of their fathers. I shall denounce this gray-headed man, this Thomas Milton, from the pulpit. His years shall not save him ; for he has gone over to the enemy."

CHAPTER XV.

THE GREAT MATCH.

THE great match was now close at hand. Ned Black marshalled his men, and every one was in readiness. Excursion trains were to be run to Milltown from the neighboring towns: for here was a good opportunity to make some money. A multitude of coaches were chartered to convey the crowd from Milltown to the green in Dornfield, where the last game was to be played. The stores and places of business in both villages were to be closed during the afternoon. The selectmen of Dornfield had many applications, from enterprising Milltownites, for permission to erect booths for the sale of lemonade and ginger-beer on the grounds; but they haughtily rejected them. The farmers, far back in the neighboring country, took their old mares out of the pastures, in order, as they expressed it, to "gant 'em up a little" before the day of the game; for they would have to convey entire families many miles. Mr. Baslee got his landau

from the city just in season, and Mrs. and Miss Baslee's French costumes arrived at the nick of time. Mr. Bolder was going to drive over tandem, and the Milltown minister proposed to take the opportunity of speeding his Morgan horse on the road, while Mr. Bolder drove alongside as a gentle critic. The village vagabonds went out to Muddy Pond, and collected the water lilies, proposing to charge two cents apiece for them on the day of the game. Some of the Dornfield boys living on the very outskirts of the village had thought of doing the same thing ; but the Milltown boys got ahead of them, and pulled all the lilies. They were "sharp."

"We have been very fortunate in keeping O'Callahan straight," said Mr. Tom Milton to Black, on the Thursday before the game.

"That is true ; he has been a plague, indeed."

"Plague ! there is no word in the English language that can do him justice. I would not go through the trials I have had with him for a thousand dollars. No, sir ! Time and time again have I taken him from the Milltown lock-up. Old Justice Tooms has denounced me without stint or measure, for upholding drunkenness. My pastor looks at me, every time I meet him, with a long-drawn face ; and I don't feel quite easy myself. The fellow is wily and obstinate, lazy and huffy. Think of his intruding himself,

on the night of the party, without an invitation, into my house: what impudence! He will hear from me after this match. He will find out that we are not all fools. Why, I 'm out of pocket on his account several hundred dollars. I sent for his cousin from Ireland, and got him a place; and so it has gone on to the end of the chapter. He has kept pretty straight, however, since he has boarded in the same house with you."

"Yes, pretty straight," said Black. "Oh! we are sure of him now."

"We must keep a close watch on him for the next two days," said Mr. Milton, as Black left him. In the early evening, as the old gentleman was riding out with his niece, on the road which led to Milltown, he met Pat O'Callahan trudging along in his best suit, the pointed boots, and the flaring ends of his broadcloth pantaloons legs covered with dust. Behind him came a short, thick-set Irish-woman, followed by five little children.

"Eh, what's this? what's this?" said Mr. Tom Milton, suddenly reining up.

"It's meeself," said Pat, touching his hat, with a wave of his hand. "Coom up, coom up!" said he, beckoning to the woman. "This is Mrs. O'Callahan.—Mr. Milton, Mrs. O'Callahan; Miss Milton also."

"Your cousin's wife, hey? when did she come over?"

"She didn't come over at all, at 'all. This is me wife."

"Your wife!" thundered Mr. Milton.

"Yes: I was married an hour since to Mrs. Ryan."

Mr. Milton looked up and down the street, and backed his horse into the fence, and then struck him heavily with the whip. The horse plunged forward; and it took all the driver's efforts for a few moments to subdue him.

"Those your children?" said he, at length, to Mrs. O'Callahan.

"They are, sir," said she, catching at the smallest one, and pulling up its stockings.

"And fine childer they are," said Pat.—"Coom here, Pat; coom here, Tommy! We didn't go on a bridal trip, bekase of the match coming."

"Five of 'em, aint there, Molly?" said Mr. Milton, gasping for breath.—"Whoa, you beast!"

"Five," said his niece, struggling with a fit of laughter.

"I was a coming to see if ye could be helping me to find a house, squire?" said Pat, with one foot on the hub of the carriage wheel, settling his hat, with an air of being able to pay off any kindness that might be bestowed on him.

Mr. Milton struck his restive horse again, wrathfully. The steed backed and reared.

"Keep right on to the house, Pat," exclaimed Miss Milton. "We shall be back in an hour." The horse bore them down the road at a furious pace, leaving Pat and his family enveloped in a cloud of dust.

"Did you ever, Molly,—did you ever?" exclaimed her uncle, after he had restrained the horse. "This caps the climax. A widow, with five children! well, well! Lucky I was driving: I should have told him, if I had been walking, to take the shortest road to the infernal regions.—Whoa, old mare! those blows were not intended for you.—Well, there is one satisfaction: there is nothing more that he can do, as I can see."

"Why don't you take a cheerful view, uncle? Pat's given hostages to fortune."

"He has, indeed,—five of 'em; regular little tramps. Wonder what Ned Black will say to this! Well, well: we've got to stand it. I believe those chaps over in Milltown are at the bottom of this."

When the Miltons returned, they found Pat and his family encamped on the piazza. Quarters were found for them over the stable, for the night; and, on the following morning, a tenement was hastily fitted up in the village.

Pat wished it to be well understood that he had

given up his bridal trip, which he might have taken. There was an excursion train just ready to start for the city, and he was urged to go ; but considerations of the coming match induced him to give it up. Ned Black recognized the hand of Stetlow in this effort to get Pat away from the scene of the encounter ; but he kept his own counsel. He was constantly with Miss Milton, arranging the plans for the decorations to be put up after the victory. He heard that Rose Snelve had been seized with a fever, and was quite sick. This news gave him some severe compunctions ; but he speedily overcame them in the fascinating society of Miss Milton, who seemed to incline towards him more and more. He had no doubt of his ability to win her. He noticed that Bobbie Snelve gazed at him with a lowering countenance, and with a contemptuous look. He took the opportunity to push the little fellow hastily one side, at the last meeting of the ball-club before the match ; for the boy was getting too much in the way, and wanted snubbing.

“What *is* the matter with you, Bobbie, lately?” exclaimed Miss Milton, on the Friday evening before the match, as she sat on the piazza, working the initials “N. B.” in a blue handkerchief.

“Nuthin,” said Bobbie. “What’s ‘N. B.’ stand for?”

"Can't you imagine?" said Miss Milton, blushing slightly.

"N. B. 'Take notice,' I guess."

His companion laughed. "Now, Bobbie, what does make you so blue lately? You are not my bright little friend you used to be. Isn't your sister any better?"

She looked at him narrowly: but he did not vouchsafe an answer, and presently walked silently down the avenue towards his home.

"There is something the matter with Bobbie," said she, gazing after him. "He is not the light-hearted, enthusiastic boy he was. It cannot be his sister's illness; for she is getting better. After this match, I must take him in hand again, I am not going to allow him to break away from me yet."

At last, the day of the match arrived, clear and beautiful as could be desired. Mr. Tom Milton arose in great spirits, and gave orders during the morning for the *fête* which was to follow the match, so certain was he of victory. As he was gazing in admiration at his tulip beds, late in the morning, he heard footsteps behind him, and turning around saw Mrs. O'Callahan.

"Ah, Mrs. O'Callahan! good-morning! Come up for the potatoes, I see. How is your husband this morning?"

"And is he here?" said Mrs. O'Callahan, with a slight snivel.

"Here! What do you mean? was he coming up?"

"And he did not come home last night, and I thought you might be knowin' where he is."

Mr. Milton was thunderstruck. He shouted suddenly to his man to harness up; and, telling Mrs. O'Callahan to seek his niece, set off hastily to find Ned Black. That young man had not heard of the disappearance of Pat. Mr. Milton cocked his hat on one side of his head, as he always did when he was in a temper, and drove rapidly to Milltown to see Justice Tooms, and ascertain if Pat was at his old pranks again. Pat was not in the lock-up. The justice had not heard of his being in any trouble. After many inquiries, Mr. Milton found a man who had seen Pat walking to Dornfield in the morning. Mr. Milton drove rapidly back.

Long before the hour appointed for the game, the crowd began to come in from the neighboring villages. Troops of boys and young men walked through the quiet lanes of Dornfield, slashing the graceful overhanging boughs with sticks, throwing base-balls across the street at each other, and shouting out their opinions of prominent players. The boys' hats all seemed to be too small or too large. The young men

strolled along, with their hands in their pockets ; many of them smoking. The young Irish-American was there, with pointed shoes first impressing themselves upon the attention, and a countenance expressing his ability to become President of the United States. The coats of their crowd were of that peculiar hue never seen anywhere save on a ball-field,—a shade of brown perfected by the united action of the sun and the dust on a hundred battle-fields. The peaceful house dogs, alarmed at the irruption of these baseball Goths, bayed incessantly ; and occasionally the high voice of a housewife could be heard, as she drove out some boys from her strawberry bed. The inhabitants on the route to Dornfield, also, found them a very thirsty army. These were the skirmishers and the advance-guard. Afterwards came the coaches ; their tops covered with men, young and old, from the neighboring towns, and the interior filled with young ladies. Hardly had the boom of one resounded upon the bridge over the river, before it was followed by another. A cloud of unwonted dust began to envelop the coaches and whiten the foliage along the road, and the man in the linen duster looked with a feeling of self-satisfaction on his broadcloth-clad fellow-traveller. After the coaches, came the fine equipages of the newly enriched Milltownites. The Dornfield people who did not

go to the ball-ground, especially those who had worked during the morning over big dinners for their considerate visitors, who came from a distance, with the baby and the rest of the family, and were now too tired to witness the game, peeked out through the blinds to witness the splendor of Mrs. Baslee's turn-out, the dash of Mr. Bolder's tandem, and the fine stepper of the minister, together with a number of emulous imitators. There was Mrs. Smith, wife of the agent of the Duck Mills, in a new basket-wagon, drawn by a horse fresh from the plough; and Mr. Grover, with a span in perfectly new and shining harness, but attached to an ancient carryall. How inferior the clothes of the Dornfield people seemed that day! The gay silk parasols of the visitors caught the eye, as one looked over the great crowd seated on the scaffoldings erected around two sides of the ball-field.

Two o'clock came. The ball-men walked about in their new uniforms,—the Milltown nine in crimson leggings, and the Dornfield in blue; kicking aside bats, or tossing the ball to each other, and running about with that superfluous energy and strength which was a wonder to valetudinarians like Mr. Silver.

“Well, now, we are in for it for two mortal hours in the hot sun,” said the latter to his wife, who was accompanied by Miss Gould. “When

you 've seen one inning, you 've seen all there is to be seen. A fellar hits at a piece of stuffed leather. Doesn't hit it ; whirls round after his coat-tails, — if he had any, he would. Does hit it ; runs to the first base ; is caught out, with immense applause. Another tries ; gets round amid tumultuous cheering. You cheer, my dear ; we all cheer. We don't know exactly why ; but we do. It is just as if a lot of people had been condemned to sit on hard pine boards all the afternoon in a scorching sun, not expecting much, and perfectly delighted at seeing some kind fellow stand on his head once an hour. When you 've seen one inning, you 've seen all."

"I expect this is to be a severe struggle, my dear," said his wife, arranging a havelock for her husband. "They say that Mr. Grandhurst is to be the umpire : the Miltons have been posting him up in the rules of the game."

"He'll get enough of that," growled Mr. Silver.

"I think that a sculptor could get some ideas," said Miss Gould, half shutting one eye, and gazing dreamily with the other, "if they should study the attitudes of the ball-players. See that young man standing, resting his arm upon the shoulder of a friend. The pose is admirable ;" and she immediately took out her sketch-book,

from which a lot of dried fern-leaves flew out, giving Mr. Silver plenty of occupation to collect.

"His figure would smack of base-ball," rejoined Mr. Silver, resuming his seat, with a sigh. He informed his wife that he should go home after the first inning.

The crowd grew impatient: two o'clock had arrived. Every seat was filled, and the neighbouring tree-tops were loaded with men and boys. Why did they not begin? Ned Black was in close consultation with Mr. Milton, Miss Milton, and the members of his nine. Mr. Graham had also been invited to join the deliberation: while Bobbie Snelvel sat beside Miss Milton. The disappearance of Pat had overwhelmed the party with confusion. What was to be done?

"I suppose we could postpone the match," said Graham.

"No! By all the powers, this affair is going to be played out to-day," exclaimed Mr. Milton. "I've had enough of this suspense."

Ned Black thought that the game had better be played. They could put in Kennedy for pitcher, and take Borroughs from centre-field, and put him on first base in place of Kennedy. Sam Bird could play centre-field. Bobbie Snelvel uttered an involuntary "my!"

"What do you think of this change, Bobbie?" asked Miss Milton.

"Kennedy can't pitch worth a cent," he exclaimed. "The Milltown nine could hit all his balls."

"The boy is mistaken," said Black, in an angry manner. "I know the capacity of every man on the nine, intimately, of course."

"Who do you think would be a good pitcher, Bobbie?" asked Mr. Graham.

"Dick Softy," answered Bobbie, confidently. "He throws a real twister. I've seen him playing with the Milltown nine, occasionally. He used to go over there to practise. They say over there that he is as good as O'Callahan."

"Dick Softy!" exclaimed all present, in mingled tones of astonishment and anger.

"Boy, you don't know what you are talking about," said Mr. Tom Milton, in a severe manner; while Ned Black turned indignantly, and went out of the room, with the rest of the nine.

"I hope you will listen to the counsel of this little fellow," said Graham, in his decided tones.

"What! what!" exclaimed Mr. Milton, who was walking up and down his library in great excitement.

Graham asked Bobbie to go for a glass of water, went to the door and locked it, and then returned in a calm manner.

"Mr. Milton," said he, "perhaps you do not know that Mr. Black intends to sell this game, and has arranged all his plans accordingly."

Miss Milton and her uncle looked at the speaker with astonishment.

"I repeat it," said Graham; "I have the best of reasons, based both on direct and indirect testimony, that this is his intention. Money has become a necessity to him. He is involved in several speculations with unreliable fellows in Milltown. They have bet heavily on this game; excited by your avowed intention, Mr. Milton, to obtain the victory, and taking advantage of the rivalry which has existed between yourself and your old business friends. I have made a study of Ned Black. Furthermore, he has taken money from the bank; and must return it, or he is ruined."

Mr. Milton sank into a chair, and gazed at Graham with a look of betrayed confidence, which is so painful to see upon an honorable old gentleman's face. Miss Milton listened, while the color came and went rapidly upon her distressed face.

"I tell you he means to let our nine be defeated by some false play," continued Graham. "His friends have made bets with honorable men with that air of certainty which is unmistakable in men of their standing. I know Black to be a man thoroughly destitute of honor."

"Your *protégé*!" exclaimed Mr. Milton,— "that handsome, manly fellow?"

"Yes, my *protégé*," replied Graham, in a bitter tone.

"Dick shall be put in as pitcher!" exclaimed Miss Milton, jumping up.

"What shall be done with Black?" asked her uncle, with an air of perplexity.

"Let him play until he manifests his intentions," said Graham. "He can be watched narrowly: I desire to convince you both."

"It shall be done," said Mr. Milton, excitedly. "We'll block him yet. When he shows his colors, we'll put in a new man. They sha'n't say but that we made a brave fight."

The door was unlocked, and Ned Black re-entered, presently, to say that the crowd were very impatient.

"We've concluded that it will be best to try Dick Softy," said Mr. Milton.

"Yes," said Miss Milton, casting a glance at Ned Black which he could not interpret, "we think it will be best to try him. Mr. Graham has seen him play, and corroborates Bobbie's story."

The young man's countenance flushed; but he offered no opposition, save what was expressed in a contemptuous smile at the mention of his adversary's name. He went out to announce the decision to the club. The men were very indignant, and refused to play. Finally, Black

persuaded them to accept Dick into their ranks ; telling them that Mr. Milton strongly desired it. The old gentleman had been at great expense for them ; and he must be humored. It was strange, however, that the testimony of that little Bobbie Snelvel should have such weight.

So Dick was found ; and, after some consultation with the Miltons, he consented to play. His heart throbbed with pleasure as Miss Milton took his hand in both of hers, and said, " We depend upon you."

The impatient crowd hissed and shouted at the delay. When the ball-players took their respective positions, there was great rejoicing. Dick Softy's appearance as pitcher for the Dornfield nine was greeted with astonishment ; and his first throws were watched with the utmost interest. In a moment it was evident that he pitched fully as well as O'Callahan. Standing with his left side toward the man at the bat, he looked warily round the field at the different players, turning the ball in his fingers ; and then, with lightning-like rapidity throwing his right foot forward, sent in the ball. It seemed to describe a curve, and when the Milltown players hit at it, eluded their blow, or flew off the bat in a foul ball. Ned Black, who was noted for his skill in catching foul balls, played superbly in the first inning. He seemed to know by instinct

which way the rapidly twisting ball would rebound when it struck the earth at different angles ; and, while apparently running away from the ball, it rebounded into his hands. Only one man succeeded in getting to the second base during the first inning, and he was put out by the quick eye of Dick, as the player was stealing to the third base. Miss Milton sat beside her uncle. Graham and Bobbie Snelvel were also of the party. Never were two players watched with such interest by four people. Miss Milton sat with parted lips, gazing at the two men, as if they were the leaders of opposing forces. Dick seemed inspired. His head was never at rest. His lithe form threatened to be rent by the force with which he sent the ball in. Ned Black's figure showed to great advantage in his handsome uniform. He played in a cool, collected manner, never making a mistake. Miss Milton felt that he often looked in her direction. She was fascinated by him. She heard the people about her praise him, and speak of his wonderful skill, and of his extraordinary good looks ; and thought with a dull pain of Graham's report concerning him. Perhaps it was a false one. No errors had been made yet. The game promised to be intensely exciting. What if Black should prove himself true ? It had been decided that Dornfield should elect an umpire for the first half of

the game; and Milltown, for the second Through the influence of the Miltons, Mr. Grandhurst, who said that he had played cricket in England, was chosen Dornfield's umpire. Dressed in an English plaid suit, in broad-soled walking shoes, he accordingly stood in the neighborhood of the home base.

"What's that umpire got on his head," said one of the spectators from Milltown, in a tone of derision, pointing at Grandhurst.

"It looks like half a dried pumpkin," said a companion. "He don't know the rules of the game, no how. See there!" he exclaimed, as loud hisses went up from the crowd, when Grandhurst decided that Billy Plummer, who fell flat, and grasped the first base with his hand, shortly before the ball reached the first-base man, was out. The Milltown boys amused themselves by throwing stones at the umpire's hat. Presently, loud laughter arose, when a ball twisted about, evaded the batter's effort, and compelled Grandhurst to present his coat-tails to it. Cries arose of "Fair hit!" "a good un," mingled with imitations of cat cries and the barking of dogs.

"This is a pretty business," said Grandhurst. "Why do they throw these balls so deusedly hard? There is no sense in it. A fellar could get his eyes put out. I feel as if I had got

among a lot of harum-scarum Indians. There's no science in the game."

The Miltons were not the only intensely interested spectators. The top benches of the scaffolding were covered with middle-aged men, who sat with rounded backs, and hats over their eyes, glaring sharply over the field, and putting down the score. Young ladies chatted merrily with young gentlemen seated on the more eligible benches, and were taught how to record the events of the game. Whenever a Milltown player hit one of Dick's balls, and drove it down the field, the Milltownites all rose on the benches, and leaned far forward, gazing to see its fate, with anxious eyes. Sam Snell was perched upon one of the highest seats. Farmer Snell and son had agreed to draw lots, to see who should spend the afternoon witnessing the game; for one must remain at home to fill an order for strawberries which had suddenly come in. So they took two straws; and Sam drew the short one, which condemned him to remain. After the departure of his father, Sam sought the strawberry bed, with a look of resignation; but when he heard the roars of applause from the distant ball-field, he flung down his dish with its wealth of strawberries, vaulted the fence, and ran incontinently for the scene of the encounter. Minister Denham groaned in spirit as he saw

the crowd, and heard the loud swearing of the boys in the trees. He resolved to go out, and see if he could recognize any of the members of his Sunday school. He stood a moment watching the progress of the game, and grew insensibly interested to that degree that he forgot that Miss Sullivan was waiting for him in his library. One, two, three, four innings ; and success for the Dornfield nine ! Dick's pitching seemed to demoralize the Milltown players. Ned Black was on the top wave of popular favor. His intensely interested critics could discover no fault in him. Grandhurst was retired from his position, after several unhappy decisions. He took his seat beside the Silvers, with his impression of the unthankfulness of republics confirmed. The new umpire took his place, and the game went on. The Dornfield nine went to the bat. Dick Softy got to the second base, while Black was on the first ; for both had succeeded in hitting the ball. Dick began to steal towards the third base, while the Milltown pitcher's back was turned. Black, seeing Dick's movements, ran to the second base. When the catcher received the ball, Dick was so much nearer to the third base than Black to the second, that the catcher threw to the second-base man. Dick saw this, and ran quickly for home. The second-base man, after vainly endeavoring

to touch Black, threw the ball back to the catcher, just too late to capture Dick; while Black in the mean time arrived just in season at the third base. Never was such a scene of excitement seen on a ball-field! The crowd grew hoarse with shouting.

“Tell me there’s no science in base-ball!” cried Mr. Milton, laughing until the tears stood in his eyes. “Where’s Grandhurst? I hope he saw that. Capital! capital! Dick is a trump, — I’ve been mistaken about him; and about Black too, — I don’t see but what he plays splendidly, Graham.”

“Let us watch,” said Graham, in a sober tone. Mr. Milton continued to slap his knees for half an hour in enthusiasm.

Presently the Milltown nine began to win in their turn. Dick pitched as well as ever; but Ned Black began to miss the balls, and made several wild throws. Graham touched Mr. Milton’s arm, significantly. Bobbie Snelv’s face seemed to grow smaller every moment, and his eyes larger. Miss Milton trembled with agitation. The Milltown nine gradually crept up, adding to their score, until the fortunes of war were even. Then they began to win. Ned Black was often apparently over-eager, and sent the balls to the base-men with terrible swiftness, so that they could not in many cases be held.

He made wonderful catches with one hand, which provoked the admiration of the crowd, and disarmed criticism ; but he failed to stop easy balls. Graham looked at Mr. Milton. Miss Milton averted her gaze from the field : she saw unmistakable signs of negligence in Black's playing. At the end of that inning, Mr. Milton and Graham left their seats ; and, stepping out upon the ball-field, took Black one side. Miss Milton watched them, eagerly beneath her sunshade. She saw her uncle's eager gestures and the dignified bearing of Graham ; and then the Dornfield nine closed about the group, eagerly, and the principal actors were no longer to be seen. Bobbie Snelv was anxiously gazing beside Miss Milton, and uttering various conjectures. " My ! hasn't this been a splendid game so far ! " he exclaimed.

" I wish I knew how it will result," sighed his companion.

" Oh ! we shall beat," replied Bobbie, confidently.

While the well-dressed portion of the crowd looked at each other in the lull,— the ladies taking a rapid inventory of dresses and bonnets ; the men looking over the score, settling contested points ; the Milltown players basking in the sun, in convoluted knots upon the grass, — a crowd of men and boys was seen running down from

centre-field. The policemen ran towards them, and forced them back. Still one man, without any hat and with frantic gestures, kept on. Cries of "Pat O'Callahan!" resounded from all sides. Mrs. O'Callahan, who had been watching the game in the absence of her husband, with her flock, burst into the enclosure, and, followed by her five children, tried to intercept Pat. He waved her off, however, with a loud exclamation, and kept on. The policemen hustled his family back. When he arrived among the players, he could not speak at first, having utterly winded himself. He opened the palm of his left hand before Mr. Milton, and pounded it with a world of expression with his right.

"They kidnapped me," he shouted, at length finding his voice.

"Don't you come here and tell me any lies," said Mr. Milton, eying him with contempt.

"Lies!" exclaimed Pat, rolling up his eyes: "I swear it."

"Don't swear," said Mr. Milton, severely.

"I won't," replied Pat, suddenly wilting beneath the gaze of the old gentleman. He looked pathetically at Black; but that individual stood, with folded arms, gazing moodily upon the ground. The other men of the nine wore very sad faces.

"Are you sober, Pat?" said Mr. Milton, looking him up and down.

"As sober as a baby, sur."

"Well, then, take your place as pitcher ; Dick, you will catch ; Mr. Black, you will retire from the ball-ground. Let the game go on !" said the autocratic old gentleman. " Men, I leave the honor of your nine in your hands. We are bound to win this game." The players sought their respective positions again ; while Black took his coat, and silently left the field. A report spread abroad that he had injured his hand ; but the reputation of a good ball-player is the most evanescent of all reputations. The crowd were soon eagerly following the game, in which O'Callahan had taken his place as pitcher, and Dick stood behind the bat. Pat, like some generals, required a good beating to awaken his genius. His mysterious experience during the night had not affected his base-ball powers. His eyes glistened with the light of genius ; and the ball went from his right hand with all its old subtlety. Dick knew his throwing of old. Up came the score in favor of the Dornfield nine. The trained muscles of Dick found plenty of work to do ; but they surely and steadily won the victory. At the end of the ninth inning, the Dornfield nine won the victory. Loud shouts rent the air ; and the crowd burst through the ropes, and ran across the field in a surging mass. The sun, which had been be-

hind a cloud, sent forth five golden rays, which seemed like giant fingers thrust forth to grasp the rosy arch of light-flying scud which spanned the heavens from North to South.

“Dick,” said Miss Milton, with tearful eyes, as they wandered together down the lawn in the evening, far away from the hilarious crowd, “I have been very unjust and ungrateful. I hope you will forgive me. We can be just as good friends as ever, can’t we?”

“No,” replied Dick, curtly.

“No!” echoed Miss Milton, in a sad tone of reproach, looking up at him.

“No, I can never be merely your friend; for I love you devotedly.”

Miss Milton dropped his arm, and turned partly away from him.

“I have engaged my passage for Europe,” said Dick, in a broken voice, “for next month. I intend to be gone for three years.”

His companion shuddered, put out her hand, and said in a faltering voice,—

“Don’t go, Dick!—dear Dick!”

Rose came forth out of her sick chamber, after two months of sickness, much saddened and subdued. Graham’s attentions were incessant; and her eyes were noticed to follow him, and to

dwell with a certain expression of trustfulness and confidence. People said that they must be engaged. Mrs. Cramer said she always knew that he would marry a young girl. Mrs. Farmer Snell didn't see why he shouldn't; for he was only thirty-five, and a young-looking man at that. Ned Black left town, and went out West. It was reported in after years that he kept a gambling saloon in a mining town in Colorado. The Silvers, together with Grandhurst, sailed for Europe in the fall, to be gone indefinitely. The two villages still impress a stranger with their contrasts. There is a report, however, that a branch railroad is to be put through the beautiful Dornfield intervalle.



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